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MEMO TO A. HAIG
See Page 76

EDITORIAL

K.A.L.—WHAT THE U.S. KNEW

When President Reagan told Congressional leaders on September 4, 1983, that "we have definite proof that [the Russians] intentionally shot down that unarmed, civilian airplane," he was speaking an untruth. U.S. intelligence reports that the Russians believed Korean Air Lines Flight 007 to be a U.S. spy plane had been available for two days. The claim that the attack was, as the President put it, "a terrorist act" poisoned relations with the Soviet Union, set back arms-control negotiations and provided a virulent anti-Soviet frame for Reagan's re-election campaign.

Recently declassified intelligence estimates contained in two letters written by J. Edward Fox, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, and released by former House Intelligence Committee chair Lee Hamilton last week show that the "definite proof" supported the opposite of what the President said it did. The reports confirm David Pearson's assertions in *The Nation* as early as the first anniversary of the tragedy, and repeated in his book *KAL 007: The Cover-Up*, that the Reagan Administration exploited the incident for anti-Communist ends. Seymour Hersh, in *"The Target Is Destroyed,"* also claimed that Administration officials ignored intelligence reports about the shoot-down. Hamilton's documents raise a troubling question: Was the White House inexcusably lax, or did it find it more convenient to lie?

Will President Reagan now apologize for misleading Congress and the American people? Will Jeane Kirkpatrick beg pardon for her strident performance before the United Nations? Will someone ask candidate George Bush why he participated in this cynical exercise? And now that the issue of what the U.S. knew and when it knew it has been partially resolved, will Congress at last turn its attention to the still unanswered questions surrounding Flight 007?

BUSH QUIZ
Jeff Nason
Malcolm Byrne

CUBA
Christopher Hitchens

LES AFFAIRES
Daniel Singer

CARNEY CASE
George Black

BHUTTO FOR PRESIDENT?
Lucy Komisar

THE FED
Tim Metz

TV NEWS: THE MOVIE
James Lardner

PLUTONIUM SHUTTLE

THE SPACE PROBE'S LETHAL CARGO

KARL GROSSMAN

Two years ago on January 28, the space shuttle Challenger exploded seventy-three seconds after liftoff. Despite that disaster, however, and despite continuing problems with the shuttle booster rockets, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration plans to launch two space shuttles, one in 1989 and another in 1990, each carrying a space probe utilizing what scientists have called the most toxic substance in the universe: plutonium. Each will contain more than enough plutonium to kill every person on Earth.

Theoretically, one pound of plutonium, uniformly distributed—a few millionths of a gram ending up in each person's lungs—has the potential to give everyone on the planet a fatal case of lung cancer. The 1989 space probe, Project Galileo, is to contain 49.25 pounds of plutonium dioxide, most of that plutonium 238, its most radioactive isotope. The 1990 space probe, Project Ulysses, is to contain 24.2 pounds of plutonium dioxide, also mostly plutonium 238. If those amounts of plutonium were dispersed in a Challenger-type explosion, according to Michio Kaku, professor of nuclear physics at the City University of New York, there could be a "catastrophic incident" with a death toll in the thousands or tens of thousands. "It would be tragic if in the exploration of space we pollute the Earth as a byproduct. I think this is precisely what is happening here."

Plutonium 238 is 300 times more radioactive than plutonium 239, the radioisotope used as the fuel for atomic bombs, points out Dr. John Gofman, professor emeritus of medical physics at the University of California, Berkeley, and former

(*Continued on Page 78*)

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LETTERS.

BEATING THE WRONG DEVIL

Miami Shores, Fla.

As a loyal *Nation* subscriber who has long considered Alexander Kopkind [*sic*] to be an acutely perceptive commentator on national affairs, I was greatly disappointed by his story "Paul Simon: Return of the Liberal," in the December 5, 1987, issue. Although there are some elements of Simon's program that should be skeptically viewed by the left, the degree of skepticism displayed by Kopkind was clearly excessive, particularly when that was not balanced by a recognition of those elements of Simon's program that should be universally applauded by people on the left.

Kopkind's first questionable point of skepticism was his halfhearted recognition of Simon's emphasis of the regressive aspects of deficit spending. Kopkind states: "Debt service may under some circumstances be seen as regressive," but he fails to state those circumstances in which it is not regressive. Furthermore, while he acknowledges one of the regressive aspects of debt service ("it takes a bigger bite out of lower incomes than upper ones"), he fails to acknowledge the other regressive aspect of it (it is paid out disproportionately to higher-income people). Kopkind also fails to acknowledge the fact that Simon has attacked the Reagan-era deficit from a progressive angle by proudly proclaiming that he voted against the 1981 and 1986 tax bills on the ground that they ultimately lowered the top marginal tax rate from 70 percent to 28 percent.

Kopkind's second questionable point of skepticism is his claim that Simon upset Republican Senator Charles Percy in 1984 "largely on the charge that Percy did not offer uncritical support for Israeli policy." This claim, which is based solely on Simon's ability to raise funds from pro-Israel political action committees, becomes absurd when one considers the fact that Percy outspent Simon by $850,000. It becomes even more absurd when one considers the voting breakdown of the Simon-Percy race. Simon upset Percy because his emphasis on traditional Democratic themes earned him the support of ethnic swing voters in the Chicago area and because his recognition of the economic crisis faced by rural America earned him the support of traditionally Republican voters in downstate Illinois. Kopkind's contention, therefore, not only ignores the fact that factors other than money decide at least some elections, it also ignores Simon's ability to appeal to a broad cross-section of voters.

Kopkind's third questionable point of skepticism is his lukewarm endorsement of Simon's foreign policy views. In Kopkind's article, *Nation* readers learn nothing about Simon's perfect ratings from the Council for a Livable World, they learn nothing about Simon's willingness to express his opposition to *contra* aid just as firmly in Miami as he does in Minneapolis and they learn nothing about Simon's pledge to negotiate immediately a nuclear test-ban treaty with the Russians upon taking office. Kopkind summarizes Simon's entire foreign policy record in one sentence that begins and ends with left-handed compliments that do not nearly do justice to a very impressive record.

While there are aspects of Simon's record that even I oppose, Simon's overall program is much more appealing to most *Nation* readers than Kopkind's article suggests. Like all politicians, Simon does have his flaws, but those are much smaller and his strengths much greater than those of any other Democratic candidate. He deserved a much fairer hearing than that given him by Kopkind.

Patrick Toomey
Simon for President Campaign

KOPKIND REPLIES

New York City

Fate decreed many years ago that my name, and probably my writing, would be conflated by careless readers with those of Alexander Cockburn, but loyal reader Patrick Toomey has not shown himself to be a careful critic, either of the unimportant credits of a story or to the substance of the story itself. For example, I specifically stated that debt service might *not* be considered regressive when "the debt itself [is] incurred for progressive ends—funding the impoverished public sector, for instance, and building a productive social infrastructure." That is, the benefits produced by borrowing would outweigh the burden of repayment. The Balanced Budget Amendment, which Paul Simon still supports, is virtually designed to solidify the regressive, nonredistributive aspects of Federal expenditure into the all-important budgetary process. Simon's populist vote against the pro-greedy tax reform bill should have alerted him to the antipopulist nature of the amendment. The fact that he heartily endorsed it suggests that here, at least, he is a politician pandering to a befuddled electorate fired up over "the deficit," rather than a principled advocate for the disadvantaged.

Simon's "ability to raise funds from pro-Israel political action committees" is not some lucky talent, like the ability to balance a beer coaster on one's nose, or whistle and chew gum at the same time. Simon earned his PAC money the old-fashioned way: He worked for it, by making himself more pro-Israel than Percy. It should be remembered that in 1984 pro-Israel meant pro-Likud, pro-invasion (of Lebanon) and pro-permanent occupation (of the West Bank and Gaza). One has only to look at the headlines out of the Middle East in the past month to see the results of the policies Simon championed. Most commentators in 1984 remarked on Simon's aggressive tactics. *The Wall Street Journal*, for instance, reported on a Simon fund-raising letter that "placed Mr. Percy in a league with anti-Israel 'guerrilla bands or hostile Arab states.'" Simon claimed he had not seen the contents of the letter. That didn't seem to matter with the pro-Israel PACs, which honored him with the most money given to any senatorial candidate that year. No doubt his endorsement of the Republican bill banning the Palestine Information Office represents further repayment of his debt to the Israel lobby. I'd agree that that debt service is regressive.

I don't know what standards of perfection the Council for a Livable World maintains, but livability for a liberal may be only tolerability for somebody else. In any case, Simon seems to be taking ever harder lines even as Toomey writes. Simon endorses U.S. military intervention in the Persian Gulf, he warmly supports intervention in Afghanistan and is making all those silly noises about building up "conventional" warfighting capability that Democrats now do to prove their military machismo after President Reagan stole the peace issue from them in the Washington summit with Gorbachev.

Andrew Kopkind

BROTHERLY LOVE

Los Angeles

Your editorial titled "Long Haul to Democracy," which appeared in the November 7, 1987, issue, is not only inaccurate, it does a tremendous disservice to the entire membership of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and shows how little political understanding you have.

As a former member of I.B.T. Local 572, in Los Angeles, I can testify to the fact that the teamsters' union is not only one of the most democratically run unions in America, it also has one of the best benefit programs and offers its members a comprehensive shop steward system. The fact that you disagree with the political views expressed within the teamsters' union should not be the basis for making wholesale judgments about a lack of democracy within the entire union.

Concerning corruption within the I.B.T., this cannot be denied. But why pick on the teamsters? I can list several unions within the A.F.L.-C.I.O. that are now, or have been in the past, riddled with one form of corruption or another. Let's begin with the Hotel Employees/Restaurant Employees International, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, the International Longshoremen's Association and the Bricklayers' Union, to name just a few. Is Jackie Presser more of a bad boy that Bricklayers' Union president John Joyce? I don't recall that Presser plays a leading role in the American Institute for Free Labor Development, with its foreign policy of assisting the Reagan Administration in smashing leftist unions in Latin America. What I do recall is that the I.B.T. was expelled from the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

(*Continued on Page 92*)

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CONTENTS.

Volume 246, Number 3

LETTERS
74

EDITORIALS
73 K.A.L.—What the U.S. Knew
73 Plutonium Shuttle: The Space Probe's Lethal Cargo — *Karl Grossman*
75 More Vietnams?
76 Memo to Haig — *Jeff Nason and Malcolm Byrne*

COLUMNS
79 Minority Report — *Christopher Hitchens*

ARTICLES
80 Letter From Europe: *Les Affaires*, or Zola Was Right — *Daniel Singer*
84 Dirty Hands in Honduras: The Many Killers of Father Carney — *George Black*
87 Compromises of a Candidate: Benazir Bhutto Is Running Hard — *Lucy Komisar*
90 The Deregulatory Agency: O.M.B.'s Chokehold on Government — *Mark A. Pinsky*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
93 Greider: Secrets of the Temple: How The Federal Reserve Runs the Country — *Tim Metz*
94 Films — *James Lardner*
98 Theater — *Thomas M. Disch*
101 Art — *Arthur C. Danto*

Drawings by Frances Jetter

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EDITORIALS.

More Vietnams?

The long-awaited report of the Federal Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, released on January 10, confirms what readers of *The Nation* have known for some time: that improved U.S.-Soviet relations and progress in nuclear arms control are likely to be accompanied by calls for enhanced U.S. conventional-weapons capabilities and for greater forcefulness in responding to "low-intensity conflicts" in the Third World.

The commission, headed by Under Secretary of Defense Fred Iklé and nuclear analyst Albert Wohlstetter, labored for a year on the report, titled "Discriminate Deterrence." Its membership represents a virtual Who's Who of the military-intellectual establishment, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, William Clark, Samuel Huntington and Henry Kissinger. The task of this blue-ribbon panel was to develop a coherent and credible military strategy for the 1990s and the opening decades of the twenty-first century.

In a sense, the document represents a last-ditch effort by an aging old guard to find a convincing rationale for the globalist military posture it has championed for so many years. As suggested by the report, the "grand strategy" of the postwar era "needs to be brought into line with contemporary realities." This approach clearly precludes any innovative thrusts in political or military thinking. The Soviet Union remains our mortal enemy, and nuclear weapons are

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still needed as the weapon of last resort. But the commission members do acknowledge that existing doctrine has lost some of its credibility. "An emphasis on massive Soviet attacks leads to tunnel vision," the report notes. "An excessive focus on these contingencies diverts defense planners from trying to deal with many important and far more plausible situations in which threats of nuclear annihilation would not be credible."

To overcome the perils of "tunnel vision," the study makes three main points:

§ The main focus of defense planning must shift from the East-West divide in Central Europe to the peripheries of NATO and to vital areas of the Third World. Particular emphasis should be placed on the protection of U.S. interests in Latin America, East Asia and the Middle East.

§ In accordance with this shift, the United States should place less reliance on nuclear weapons and instead build up its capacity to fight with nonnuclear arms. To insure success in such engagements, new conventional weapons should be developed that have the range, accuracy and destructive power of tactical nuclear munitions.

§ To counter regional instability and Soviet-inspired insurgency, the United States must enhance its capabilities to intervene in low-intensity conflicts—limited regional wars. This will require improved airlift and sealift capacity for America's rapid-deployment forces, plus increased aid to allies in the Third World. Aid should also be provided to anti-Communist guerrillas in accordance with the "Reagan doctrine."

"One overriding message" is intended by this report, the commission members assert—"the need for flexibility" in defense planning. "Plainly the Pentagon must give preference to more mobile and versatile forces—forces that can deter aggression by their ability to respond rapidly and discriminately to a wide range of attacks."

For those familiar with the evolution of U.S. military thinking, this will sound vaguely familiar—and for good reason. Thirty years ago, when defense planners of the Eisenhower era exhibited a similar brand of tunnel vision with their reliance on "massive retaliation," a group of strategic dissidents—including Henry Kissinger, then a professor at Harvard—issued a similar call for strategic flexibility. Out of this proposal emerged the strategy of "flexible response," and with it, the doctrine of "counterinsurgency"—the Pentagon's original term for low-intensity warfare. Under John Kennedy, flexible response became the byword at the Department of Defense and counterinsurgency the rallying cry in Vietnam. Before America perceived the risks inherent in these strategies of unlimited intervention, it was stuck in a bloody quagmire in Southeast Asia.

Despite this experience, the commission report is likely to be greeted with considerable approval in Washington, by leaders of both major parties. As suggested by *Nation* defense correspondent Michael Klare, mainstream Democrats have adopted a get-tough military posture that places great emphasis on the modernization of conventional forces [see Klare, "Arms and the Democrats," November 8, 1986]. The need for beefed-up interventionary units has emerged as a theme in the campaign speeches of Democratic presidential hopefuls Michael Dukakis, Richard Gephardt and Albert Gore.

Barring a victory by Jesse Jackson, therefore, the next Administration, whether Democratic or Republican, is likely to pursue some version of the strategy enunciated in "Discriminate Deterrence." While some liberals discern rays of enlightenment in this strategy—notably the emphasis on conventional rather than nuclear warfare—there is nothing to celebrate. If followed to its logical conclusion, it will lead Washington to assume the role of world policeman and ultimately to risk involvement in a series of brush-fire wars that could become conflagrations.

Memo to Haig

You performed a public service and gave your long-shot candidacy a substantial boost in December, when you began asking sometime Vice President, sometime candidate George Bush about his unexplained role in the Iran arms deals. You worked in the Nixon White House—you know a cover-up when you see one. Bush has been ducking the question ever since. He says lamely that "the *contra* report explains all that very clearly." But the final report of the Iran/*contra* investigating committees didn't clear Bush, it ignored him.

Your problem now is twofold. First, all the Republican presidential candidates are attacking Bush, especially Bob Dole, who has finally unsheathed his hatchet. Unless you can get back out front on the issue, the other candidates may reap all the benefits of your aggressiveness. Second, Bush is fighting back with some success. At the debate in Des Moines on January 8, he said, "I have answered every question" about his role in the Iran/*contra* scandal. None of the candidates challenged him.

We suggest that you ask Bush the following questions to reassert your leadership on the issue and to flush out the vulnerable but still strong Vice President:

Everyone now knows about the February 1986 memorandum from John Poindexter to Robert McFarlane, which said, "The President and the VP are solid in taking the position that we have to try" to arrange the arms-for-hostages deal. You don't need to press Bush for an explanation. Let the media and the other candidates do that. Instead, you should turn up the heat by asking Bush about a little-known meeting. On July 29, 1986, Bush met with Amiram Nir, an Israeli arms dealer. Nir bluntly told him that the arms-for-hostages deal was being struck with the most radical, not the most moderate, elements of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's regime. Was this news to Bush? Why didn't he, as the overseer of Reagan's antiterrorism policy, immediately demand that the Iran initiative be halted?

Challenge the Vice President about private arms sales to Iran. Those are not being discussed by the other candidates, and the trail leads right to Bush's door. While the White House was dealing with the Ayatollah, Douglas Menarchik, an aide to the Vice President, was informed by a former

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Central Intelligence Agency operative of a deal, allegedly being carried out by the U.S. government, to sell arms to Iran. Menarchik also knew of a Pentagon plan to buy weapons for the *contras* with profits from the Iran arms sales. Did Menarchik ever pass on to his boss his knowledge of these plans?

For a follow-up question, you might ask about the curious comments Bush made at a meeting of top Administration officials on November 10, 1986. The participants were planning ways to limit the damage caused by revelations of the arms sales to Iran. Bush inquired about another private deal to sell arms to Iran, this one said to be worth $2 billion. The Customs Service informant who helped expose the deal—and who died mysteriously in July 1986—claimed that formal approval for the transaction was supposed to come from Marine Commandant P.X. Kelley and from Bush. How does Bush explain his alleged role?

Bush also proclaims his ignorance of the use of arms-sale funds to finance the *contras*. His assertions that he was "out of the loop" are even more suspect in this area than in the Iranian affair. The Iran/*contra* Congressional committees never called Bush to testify and did not question his top aides very carefully. The authors of the committees' report rehashed the evidence implicating Bush, but infighting on the panels prevented them from drawing the obvious conclusions about Bush's involvement.

You yourself can and should draw those conclusions. The potential political benefits of catching a sitting Vice President in a possibly criminal enterprise are obviously enormous. You probably don't have to worry about being called anti-*contra*. We're assuming that Republican primary voters, whether or not they support *contra* aid, still care about constitutional government.

Perhaps the most conclusive piece of evidence on the Bush-*contra* connection was a series of memos written in April and May 1986. Two of the memos state that the purpose of a May 1, 1986, meeting between Bush and *contra* operative Felix Rodriguez was "to brief the Vice President on the status of the war in El Salvador and resupply of the contras." Bush's aides deny that *contra* resupply was ever discussed at the meetings the memos are based on, yet they tell different and conflicting tales of how the documents came to be written. Why does Bush think his aides wrote those damaging memos?

Bush is clearly being protected by staff members as well as by colleagues in the Cabinet. All have suffered a remarkable case of collective amnesia. It would seem that nobody can remember what Bush said or did, or even if he attended certain key meetings. Will Bush's staff forget everything he says when he is President too?

Query Bush on the known contacts between his office and Rodriguez concerning the *contra* resupply operation; those were on August 8 and 12, 1986, and also on October 5 and 6, 1986. It was that October that the plane carrying Eugene Hasenfus and two other American members of the resupply network was shot down over Nicaragua. The contacts suggest that the Vice President's office was familiar with the day-to-day activities of the secret operation. Even *contra* leader Edén Pastora said in a sworn deposition taken in July 1987 that Bush was in the "*contra* resupply chain of command."

While we're on the subject of Felix Rodriguez, what does Bush say about a February 1985 memo from Gen. Paul Gorman, then head of the U.S. Southern Command? In the memo, addressed to the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador, Thomas Pickering, and U.S. military adviser James Steele, Gorman said that Rodriguez's "primary commitment to the region is in [country name deleted] where he wants to assist" the *contras*. Gorman added that Rodriguez's "acquaintanceship with the VP is real enough, going back to the latter's days as DCI [Director of Central Intelligence]." Thus Rodriguez, a former C.I.A. agent, has known Bush since at least 1977, when Bush served as head of the agency. If Gorman, Steele and others knew what Rodriguez was up to, why didn't Bush? Ask Bush why Lieut. Col. Oliver North wrote in his notebook in January 1986, "Felix talking too much about VP connection." Why did North, whom Bush has praised, believe there was a "VP connection"?

On the *contra* issue, Bush has made Donald Gregg, his national security adviser, the fall guy for his own activities. Ask Bush about the meeting in which Gregg, North and Steele discussed plans to set up a base for the resupply network. (North mentioned this meeting in a September 10, 1985, entry in his notebook.) Gregg also discussed plans for *contra* leaders to visit the base. It's quite clear that Bush's staff was somehow involved in establishing the covert *contra* aid program during the time that Congress had specifically banned such activities.

And while you're at it, ask Bush about the handwritten note he sent North on Thanksgiving 1985 thanking him "for your work in Central America." Gregg has claimed that Bush was referring to North's staff work on a trip to El Salvador in 1983. Why would Bush write a thank-you note two years later? What was he really thanking North for?

Prod Bush to take responsibility for the actions of his top aide. Gregg insists he never passed on information about the *contras* and the resupply to Bush because it wasn't "vice presidential." Gregg has been caught lying to the media about his contacts with Rodriguez. Why doesn't Bush fire him?

You should know, too, about Gregg's other activities on behalf of the *contras*. According to an article in the May 1987 issue of *The Progressive*, Gregg recruited Gustavo Villoldo, a former C.I.A. agent and veteran of the Bay of Pigs invasion, in 1983 to help train the *contras*. The story, by Allan Nairn, cites a variety of intelligence and other sources who say that Villoldo was only one of a number of people whom Gregg recruited. Was Rodriguez simply a replacement for Villoldo and, further, a direct contact from the Vice President's office to the *contras*?

Finally, a general observation: Don't be afraid to take credit for raising this issue. Until you spoke up, sir, none of the other candidates had the guts to take Bush on in this area. Besides, our consultants tell us that your negative ratings are fueled by voters' concern about your, shall we say, somewhat imperious manner. Confronting Bush on his disregard for the Constitution might soften those negatives.

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And with just weeks to go before the caucuses and primaries begin, what have you got to lose? JEFF NASON AND MALCOLM BYRNE

Jeff Nason and Malcolm Byrne are information analysts at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., and editors of The Chronology: The Documented Day-by-Day Account of the Secret Military Assistance to Iran and the Contras *(Warner Books).*

Space Probe

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

associate director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. "If the plutonium [from Project Galileo] gets dispersed in fine pieces, the amount of radioactivity released would be more than the combined plutonium radioactivity returned to Earth in the fallout from all the nuclear weapons testing of the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom," which he estimates would cause 950,000 lung cancer deaths. "If it gets dispersed over Florida, kiss Florida goodbye. If it gets dispersed over Georgia, kiss Georgia goodbye."

Some scientists, chiefly from the national nuclear laboratory system and the nuclear industry, concede that plutonium is toxic but say its connection to cancer and to death in humans has yet to be proved. "The inhalation of plutonium particles can be a nontoxic, innocuous event," insists Waldo Cohn, a retired Oak Ridge National Laboratory biochemist. In reply, critics of nuclear technology point to experiments in which minute amounts of plutonium have caused death in test animals.

NASA downplays the possibility of the release of plutonium in an accident, stressing that the substance will be encapsulated in "clads" made of an alloy of iridium. "Clads were shown to survive pressures in excess of 2,000 psi [pounds per square inch]," NASA says in an environmental impact statement for the Galileo and Ulysses missions issued in November 1987. However, a Department of Energy safety analysis report for the missions, which I obtained in 1985 under the Freedom of Information Act, declared that "from the viewpoint of potential nuclear fuel release" on either of the missions, the "most critical" accidents would occur on the launch pad—and these could generate pressures higher than 2,000 pounds per square inch. Indeed, pressures up to ten times higher were estimated. According to the report, "Because of the large quantities of liquid propellants involved and the proximity of the nuclear payload, most launch pad accidents result in explosions of a magnitude that are very severe in terms of their effect on the nuclear payload." The report details various accident scenarios, including one called a "tipover" and another a "pushover," and concludes that in either accident, there could be pressures as high as 19,600 pounds per square inch. (NASA now holds that this figure is no longer valid; the November 1987 report refers to "improved estimates of explosion parameters.")

If the space probes make it safely off the launch pad and into outer space, there are other dangers. The Project Galileo space probe will leave the space shuttle after it attains orbit to explore Jupiter. But under a new NASA plan, the probe will not be sent directly to Jupiter. In the wake of the Challenger disaster, astronauts insisted on the elimination of the highly volatile liquid-fueled Centaur rocket, which originally was to power the space probes. A solid-fuel rocket was substituted, but it does not have the power of the Centaur. So NASA devised a scheme in which the probe would first go to Venus and then be "slingshot" back toward Earth, which it would circle twice, making use of the Earth's gravitational field to increase the vehicle's momentum so it can reach Jupiter. In this second part of the slingshot maneuver, the space probe would become a large bomb pointed almost at Earth—flying as close as 277 miles overhead. The November 1987 NASA report concedes:

> During the second Earth flyby . . . there is a remote but finite chance that the spacecraft may re-enter the Earth's atmosphere. Based on preliminary analysis, the Galileo project expects that this accident scenario will be deemed not credible. . . . Therefore, the project estimates the chance of inadvertent reentry to be less than one chance in one million.

The chance of a shuttle crash—which turned out to be 1 in 25—was set by NASA, before the Challenger disaster, at 1 in 100,000. Another section of this report says that "operational procedures will be developed to minimize the possibility of inadvertent Earth reentry occurring during Earth-return-flybys."

Why use plutonium on the space probes at all? It will not be used for propulsion. It will fuel what the D.O.E. and NASA call "radioisotope thermoelectric generators," which supply on-board electric power, and, in Project Galileo, less than a pound will also be distributed to 130 "radioisotope heater units" to keep instrumentation warm. The D.O.E. and NASA say there are no alternatives. Professor Kaku challenges this claim and urges the use of long-lived batteries and solar energy. Even as far away as Jupiter, he says, "it's possible with the latest advances in solar cells to generate electricity" from the sun. And for Project Ulysses, whose mission is a north-south orbit of the sun, there is certainly plentiful solar energy.

Project Galileo was originally scheduled for launch four months after the Challenger mission, and Project Ulysses was to follow weeks later—indeed, it was to be the next mission of the ill-fated Challenger. Last year I queried the D.O.E. and NASA about what new safety analyses they had made for the two projects since the Challenger disaster. The reply from D.O.E., which provides the plutonium-fueled electric generator and heat source (both made by General Electric) to NASA, was: "Since that time, no further studies/reports have been completed on this subject."

Karl Grossman, whose investigative reporting on plutonium and space-probe missions was cited by Project Censored of Sonoma State University as one of the ten "best censored" stories of 1986, is an associate professor of journalism at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. He wishes to thank Judith Long for editorial assistance.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

Havana

A few weeks ago, Cuba's Minister of Culture, Armando Hart, asked for a report on the cultural situation, with recommendations, from the editor of one of the country's literary magazines. By way of response, he was sent Boris Kagarlitsky's essay on *glasnost* and the intellectuals in the July/August 1987 issue of *New Left Review.* In elections for delegate positions in the Writers' Union, held shortly afterward, gains were registered by authors who had been frozen out of publication during the 1970s and early 1980s. In Old Havana I attended a packed theater performance of a play by a declared homosexual, which received a standing ovation.

The official Cuban party press has not yet got around to any mention of *glasnost* and has been fairly sparing in its references to *perestroika.* But the words are on everybody's lips. The Spanish-language edition of *Moscow News* is no sooner on the stands than it is snatched up, borne off and passed from hand to hand. In the bookshops there is a concentration of customers around the shelves that display the works of Mikhail Gorbachev. His latest volume, which contains admissions about the state of Soviet society that have long been kept from the Cuban readership, is not yet available, but its outlines are already well known. One critical writer, who unlike most of his friends is still a member of the party, told me that people now listen to Radio Martí in order to find out what *Pravda* is writing.

It isn't difficult to understand the misgivings of the Fidelistas about *glasnost.* First, and most obviously, they were conspicuously loyal to the Brezhnev doctrine. In the United Nations their endorsement of the Soviet positions was as near automatic as made no difference. Second, they have pardonable doubts about the degree of superpower reconciliation that is involved in the Gorbachev experiment. When the big fish become friendly, the small fish may get left out of the account. It was very noticeable that the Cuban authorities ignored the recent twenty-fifth anniversary of the missile crisis, which brought American and Soviet veterans together in a back-slapping symposium at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. Instead, *Granma* commemorated October 1987 as the twentieth anniversary of the murder of Che Guevara. Coziness at the summit can easily mean, as it did in 1962, that trivial matters (such as Nicaragua) are resolved over the heads of the Third World.

Third, and no less important, Cuba is, with Vietnam and Mongolia, one of the "less developed" members of Comecon. If *perestroika* means anything, it means an attack on subsidy and an invoking of the principle of "pay your own way." Cubans are sensitive about their dependence on Soviet bloc aid at the best of times. It must be unnerving to find that the Soviet Union is admitting that much of its own underdevelopment cannot be blamed on imperialism.

Finally, there is what one might call the metaphorical influence of *glasnost.* Brezhnev has not just gone; he has been subjected to considerable criticism and even abuse. Gustav Husak's unmourned departure came when I was in Havana. This leaves Fidel Castro as a senior statesman of the Communist world (outranked only by Kádár and Kim Il Sung) at a time when the emphasis is on youth and change.

However, Cuba is not ossified in the way that some Comecon nations are. The new developments are widely welcomed and—with the partial exception of the Castro succession—very freely discussed. Cuba's isolation within the Latin American sphere is ending, a consequence of the Reaganite mania over the *contras* and the continentwide debt crisis. The recent call by the leading members of the Organization of American States for the readmission of Cuba, after decades of blockade, sabotage and saber rattling from Washington, is only the most salient indication. But this development, too, means increased pressure for the country to become more open and modernized.

I tentatively propose a test case for those who are monitoring this process. The Cuban writer Ariel Hidalgo has been in prison for almost five years. Technically speaking, his offense is defined by a very broad law that concerns public order, and it is difficult to say much under that heading, because he did not have an open trial. But it seems probable that he committed his real infraction by writing a manuscript titled *Cuba: The Marxist State and the New Class.* Coming as it did from a veteran revolutionary and experienced teacher at a workers' college, this must have been very unwelcome to the conservatives in the Cuban Communist Party (far more unwelcome than the effusions of the protean and dubious Armando Valladares, who of course, as a dingy counterrevolutionary, has received all the publicity and attention in the United States).

I mentioned the case of Hidalgo to numerous people in the Writers' Union and elsewhere and was told that it occasions great concern. I was several times assured that he will soon be released, though sometimes this assurance was accompanied by the news that he will be put on a plane for the United States. It's by no means certain that he wants to leave Cuba, and the point, in any case, is not merely the freedom of a writer and critic but the freedom to write and criticize. The importance of *glasnost* is that society and the state recognize the need for these things, not as a favor to scribblers and intellectuals but as a matter of general health.

The attitude of the Western left to the Cuban revolution has undergone numerous fluctuations. Most of these fluctuations have had to do with actual or perceived differences between the Soviet and the Cuban "line." It was said in defense of Castro in the 1960s that he did not follow a Zhdanovite line in cultural matters or a Muscovite line in international ones. These lines of defense became rather muted in the period after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. I heard Castro deliver the rationalizations for that invasion when I was in Havana twenty years ago. One could feel a dead Soviet hand coming down. There is some irony and paradox to be found in the fact that, this time, too, the unseen pressure comes from Moscow.

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ARTICLES.

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Les Affaires, or Zola Was Right

DANIEL SINGER

Paris

In the electioneering mood of France at the turn of the year, the good advice is not, as in a whodunit, *cherchez la femme* but *cherchez l'argent*. The first round of balloting in the presidential poll takes place April 24, and Paris is full of plots and the scent of putrefaction as political scandals follow one another in quick succession. Since Socialists are prominent in some of them, the left loses part of its reputation for clean hands, but the timing of these affairs and the differential treatment of the culprits cast doubts on the independence of the judiciary. Since much of the corruption is connected with the rapidly rising cost of politics, proposals are afoot to bring some law into this jungle. Yet can one seriously reverse the trend in a country where a book attacking egalitarianism is a best seller, the reputation of an actress is hurt by the vagaries of the money market and even the manuscript of the most famous document of political honesty—Émile Zola's "J'accuse"—gets involved in a sordid story of inheritance? The common theme of these Parisian winter tales is a hackneyed postwar tune: Money is the root of all evil.

A Socialist Dr. Strangelove. The first scandal affecting the Socialist Party is the case of Christian Nucci, a former Minister of Overseas Cooperation and Development (essentially with Africa) in the government of Laurent Fabius. Nucci and his chief of staff, Yves Chalier, are accused of having used public funds under false pretenses by channeling them through a phony company. Some of this double accounting is routine. Secret payments for, say, security arrangements during a Franco-African conference are placed under another item. But Chalier apparently spent around $1 million for personal purposes, such as the purchase of a forty-seven room chateau, and Nucci roughly a quarter that amount, mainly for his electoral campaign. For offenses committed in office a minister can only be tried by a High Court of Justice selected from his fellow parliamentarians. It is only the third time since 1815 that this procedure, which requires the prior approval of the National Assembly and the Senate, has been used. The ruling coalition, which has a majority in both chambers, carried last December the final vote that set the trial in motion, timed to coincide with the electoral campaign.

The second case is that of Luchaire, the arms manufacturer that, between 1983 and 1986, despite an embargo, supplied Iran with artillery shells, pretending that the shipments were for another destination. The Socialist government, after a brief investigation, turned the matter over to the courts March 12, 1986—that is to say, three days before the election that removed it from office. The Chirac government slowed down the judicial proceedings by ordering a new internal inquiry. Although it received the report last June, it waited until November to leak the text to the press and then publish it officially. The document hurt the Socialists by reporting that François Mitterrand and his then-Minister of Defense, Charles Hernu, had been informed of the breach. It also cast doubt on the actual conduct of a senior member of Hernu's staff and suggested that one of the Minister's friends got a commission of nearly $500,000 in this shady business.

Before discussing the third case, some preliminary remarks are necessary. It is an open secret in Paris that political parties receive a lot of money illegally. The Gaullists were known at one time as the real estate party, since this was their main source of income. (A friendly realtor would buy a piece of arable land not authorized for construction, then be granted a building permit and share with the party a portion of the huge profit from the resale of the land.) Another custom, common to all parties, is to employ sympathetic contractors on public works projects in towns or regions they control. The builders overcharge and give back part of the money under the table. Finally, some businesses send bills for, say, printing leaflets, not to the party but to firms willing to put them fraudulently on their books in return for future political favors. The only problem is to avoid getting caught. The Socialist organization in Lyons forgot this, and its case is being brought to justice by the government at a politically opportune moment. The principal figure in this organization is the very same Hernu.

Charles Hernu was Mitterrand's companion during the latter's thirty-three years in the political wilderness. He is one of the apostles who converted the French left to the religion of the nuclear bomb. He was the Defense Minister in charge in July 1985 when French intelligence agents blew up the Greenpeace vessel Rainbow Warrior, in Auckland Harbor, New Zealand. However limited my compassion for this Socialist Dr. Strangelove, I suspect that if he were an actual—and not just spiritual—member of the ruling right, he would be less bothered by the French judiciary.

The "Buffoons of the Republic." Let us look at three cases of gentle treatment of government officials, beginning with the Chaumet affair, a high-society scandal. The Chaumet brothers, Jacques and Pierre, were owners of a famous jewelry store, founded in the eighteenth century, with its main shop in the fashionable Place Vendôme and subsidiaries in New York, London, Brussels and Geneva. They somehow managed to run up a deficit estimated at nearly $400 million and are now being prosecuted for fraudulent bankruptcy and for illegally engaging in the

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banking trade by setting up high-interest-bearing accounts for their biggest customers. Among the select group of seventy-four granted this privilege was the current Minister of Justice, Albin Chalandon. So far, no one is saying that the keeper of the laws did anything illegal. But other account holders have been cross-examined, and he has not. The attitude of the *juge d'instruction*, the examining magistrate in charge of the investigation, is understandable. After all, Chalandon is his superior. Opposition spokesmen are not the only ones to find his position in this affair, to put it politely, ambiguous.

The second example takes us back to the Nucci case. The new government saw Chalier, who wrote a confession incriminating his Minister, as an excellent weapon to use against the Socialists at the right time. Meanwhile, he was put on ice or, rather, on a back burner, since he was allowed to live in Brazil under an assumed name, with a perfectly genuine passport issued to him by the Ministry of the Interior. When Chalier came back to France and the examining magistrate wanted to know more about the issuing of this "true/false" passport, the Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua, did not permit his subordinates to testify, alleging that "defense secrets" were involved. But to allow the publication of the report on arms shipments to Iran, the secrets act was duly waived. Here it has been stubbornly upheld, and the Minister of Justice did not utter a word of protest against this deliberate obstruction of justice by his colleague.

The third example has to do with the National Commission for Communications and Liberty (C.N.C.L.), set up by the new government to deal with television and to allocate broadcast frequencies to radio stations. In Paris, where competition was stiff, several existing stations had to close up shop. It was, therefore, puzzling that Radio Courtoisie, which existed only on paper, got a permit. Its only apparent asset was that it was headed by an ultraright-wing journalist, allegedly a good friend of an influential member of the C.N.C.L., Michel Droit, who is a member of the French Academy and a staunch supporter of apartheid. One of the thwarted stations chose to take the matter to court, and the magistrate, after studying the case, decided he could only proceed by impeaching Droit for abuse of his official power (*forfaiture*). The use of such a hammer against an influential figure caused dismay in posh quarters. The next day, Droit's counsel sued the judge for *forfaiture*—alleging bias and leaks to the press. Despite a brave stand by the chief public prosecutor, who pleaded that if magistrates kept yielding ground they would soon be perceived as the "buffoons of the Republic," the High Court of Appeal decided in October to suspend the investigation of Droit. In December the case was transferred from its Paris judge to one in the provinces, where it is hoped it will be buried, or at least put off until after the presidential poll.

No wonder the judgment of Paris is that if you are one of the mighty you can pick your magistrate, a privilege denied a poor immigrant or even the ordinary Frenchman. Naturally, many judges know their place. Yet, quite a few, particularly the young ones, are angry. They do not wish to be clowns in a farce in which their role is to be servants not of the state, or even a class, but of the party in power.

Prohibitive Price of Politics. François Mitterrand, in a radio interview on November 16, dismissed accusations of complicity in the shipment of arms for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. After all, he pointed out, it was he who, after much argument, made the political decision not to send arms to Iran and not to stop shipping them to Iraq. With his usual tactical skill, however, he switched the focus to another subject. Since money is polluting politics, he said, let us limit campaign spending and render the whole electoral process more transparent. Watching the sudden consensus that developed on the need for such actions, the skeptic will ask why neither the left nor the right, which had been (one or the other) in office for years, ever did anything about the problem. Still, better late than never.

There is no ceiling on electoral spending in France, save the size of one's purse. In principle, the candidates who obtain more than 5 percent of the votes get back from the state some money to cover the cost of printing and mailing their

DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

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basic propaganda. In practice, this is now a mere fraction of the real costs, which have skyrocketed. An average candidate's budget in a parliamentary election is now estimated at more than $300,000. A serious contender in the forthcoming presidential poll is expected to spend between $30 million and $50 million (even though political advertising is not permitted on French radio or TV).

The would-be reformers have plenty on their plate. The suggestion of state subsidies for political parties, as in West Germany or Italy, meets some resistance in Paris. To allow a tax exemption for political contributions would give a clear advantage to parties representing the better-off. The idea of ministers and deputies declaring their net worth at the beginning and end of their term in office is welcome; France could do with some *glasnost* in this area. It could also do with lower ceilings on campaign spending—a maximum of $20 million for the coming presidential contest is being mentioned in a proposed bill—though few people believe these limitations will be respected. If they are not, a newcomer in the competition, the Communist heretic Pierre Juquin, might be the main victim of financial bias.

Early in December, I attended the Twenty-sixth Congress of the French Communist Party. The meeting place, a modern sports hall in a Paris suburb, and the ritual were the same as on the previous occasion, only the echo of dissent was this time fainter; the *rénovateurs* were either gone or had been silenced. Georges Marchais, re-elected as General Secretary, reaffirmed the wisdom of the party's current course. The leadership has clearly opted for slow agony rather than a radical cure based on a movement from below. When Marchais captured 15.5 percent of the presidential poll in 1981, the result was considered disastrous. This time, he chose not to compete, and his stand-in, the earthy André Lajoinie, will probably be quite happy with half that proportion.

This time the erosion of Communist support may not have quite the same meaning. Heretofore, discontented Communist supporters could: stay at home, voting with their bottoms; resign themselves to the impossibility of radical change and vote Socialist; or, if they were angry and bewildered, switch to the racist Jean-Marie Le Pen. This time they will also have the choice of the renegade Communist Juquin. A teacher of German by trade, Juquin is a pure product of the C.P. He was a protégé of Marchais and for years the party's official spokesman. As such, for many he is not the best symbol of renewal. Yet, with feminists, ecologists and leftists supporting him, he now represents something more—the possibility for a voter to say that he or she is resigned neither to Communist sclerosis nor to Socialist betrayal. Two questions remain: Without a party machine and with a planned budget of less than $2 million, can he make an impact in this highly commercialized contest? And is an election the best terrain for a political revival?

It's the Rich That Gets the Blame. At the top of the French nonfiction best-seller list is a book with the eloquent title *The Egalitarian Machine.* It purports to demonstrate that equality "has become a reality"; indeed, that "having exceeded its goal of equality," the system has become counterproductive. Class conflicts are now a reactionary myth and the new privileged are civil servants with the security of tenure. Now, a postman or a schoolteacher in France earns around $12,000 a year, and the author of the book, Alain Minc, a civil servant turned European representative of the Italian tycoon Carlo de Benedetti, would probably consider his boss mean if he offered him that amount as an annual salary increase. So his argument is not a very tactful or decent one. But who cares? In demanding higher death duties and lower income tax, Minc is pleading *pro domo sua*, not for the moneyed gentry but for young capitalists on the make.

The author argues, rightly, that the welfare state benefits the middle classes more than the poor, whose numbers have risen dramatically with the economic crisis. Does Minc, therefore, propose to expand welfare and extend the security of tenure? No, he wants to abolish the safety net for all. Inventing a curious common cause between dynamic capitalists and outcasts, he pleads dogmatically for more flexibility, more market relations and invokes an imaginary America where the great "inequality of incomes" is combined with the "equality of opportunities."

Perusing this manifesto for yuppies, I could not help humming to "It's the poor that gets the pleasure, it's the rich that gets the blame," and I would not have bothered you with such an example of special pleading if the book did not herald a potential change of mood. Minc is on the best-seller list, but he was disowned by some of his fellow trendies who only yesterday thought one could combine a leftish

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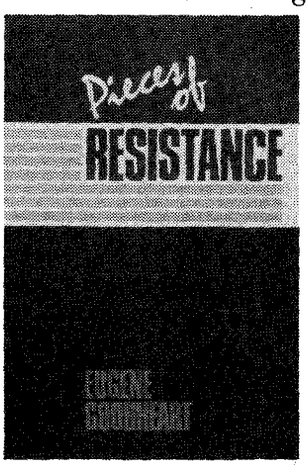

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reputation with idolatry of the market. Sympathizing with rich men and attacking privileged postmen is a bit much. The financial crash last October marked a turn in the ideological trend. Political weathercocks in Paris are already testing which way the wind is blowing.

The Lady Is for Burning. The fall of the Bourse claimed an unexpected victim, the beautiful Catherine Deneuve. The satirical weekly *Le Canard Enchaîné* published the other day a drawing of a battered Deneuve, with some plaster sticking on her face, proclaiming: "I only told you réfléchissez ['think it over']." The caption requires a word of explanation. Deneuve looks like a distinguished woman capable at any moment of reverting to her sexy role as Buñuel's Belle du Jour. Such an attractive upper-class figure was thought perfect to advertise the Compagnie de Suez, when the government decided to sell that bank to private investors. In a repetitive TV campaign, specialists praised the assets of Suez, and the distinguished Deneuve capped their sales talks with a meaningful "réfléchissez." The trouble is that by the time the buyers got their shares, the Bourse had collapsed and the bargain proved disastrous. The *Canard* wittily invented Deneuve's plea: I didn't tell you to buy, simply to think it over. An invitation to sin is forgivable but an inducement to bad investment is not, and this is how the reputation of a star was battered.

"J'accuse" for Sale. Sotheby's was hoping to stage a superb auction on December 8 in the principality of Monaco. The great-granddaughter of Émile Zola was offering to the highest bidder her great-grandfather's archives, including key documents connected with the Dreyfus case. Her own father and the French authorities intervened, and the matter was taken to court and the auction postponed. Instead of being dispersed, the collection may thus be kept together at the Bibliothèque Nationale or the institute dealing with the Dreyfus *affaire.* The very precious documents include the manuscript of probably the most famous piece of journalism ever written, Zola's "J'accuse," published in *l'Aurore* on Thursday, January 13, 1898. In writing it, the highly successful novelist risked a trial for libel, provisional exile and a terrible campaign of vilification. He was to play a leading part in the struggle between the upholders of the army, the church, the established order and the defenders of justice and truth. (And this document of disinterestedness is valued today at roughly $1 million.)

Now, as fifteen exiled Iranians are brutally expelled to Gabon to please Imam Khomeini, as the murderers of native Kanaks in New Caledonia leave their trial scot-free, the noise of protest in Paris is not deafening. Sartre is dead and, after five years of Socialist rule, the progressive "intellectual"—a term born during the battle over Dreyfus—looks like a vanishing species. Yet, let us not exaggerate the gloom. In their time, too, they had their host of scoundrels and time-servers. Dreyfus had to wait till 1906, four years after Zola's death, for a full rehabilitation. And today the younger generation is clearly rising, ready to come out into the streets to fight against racism. The political weathercocks are quite right to scrutinize the sky. A change in the ideological weather may be coming. □

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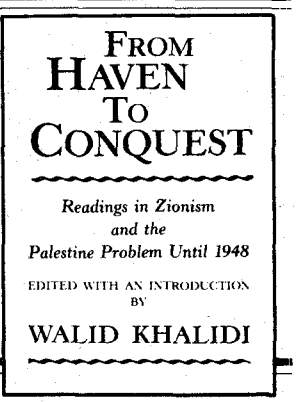

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DIRTY HANDS IN HONDURAS

The Many Killers Of Father Carney

GEORGE BLACK

Ever since Watergate, the icon of American reporting has been the smoking gun. The currency of our profession is Freedom of Information Act requests, purloined letters and secret memorandums; unless there is a body at the scene of the crime, it is hard to convince anyone that a crime was committed.

More than three years ago, in these pages, Anne Nelson and I told the story of a crime without a body—the September 1983 death in Honduras of a U.S. Catholic priest from St. Louis, Father James Carney, or "Padre Guadalupe" [see "Mysterious Death of Fr. Carney," August 4-11, 1984]. According to the official Honduran Army account, Carney, who had entered the country with a guerrilla band from Nicaragua, was presumed to have starved to death in the dense jungles of the Rio Patuca. The U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, John Negroponte, endorsed the army's version of events. Our report showed that the official story was absurd, and we pieced together a lot of circumstantial evidence that Carney had been detained and killed at the main *contra* supply base of El Aguacate. But there was no smoking gun.

Now, however, Florencio Caballero, a deserter from Honduras's military intelligence apparatus and a former member of the death squad known as Battalion 316, has given a detailed account of what happened to Jim Carney. Caballero says that the priest was captured along with other survivors of the hapless guerrilla column, in what the military called Operation Patuca. He was then interrogated at El Aguacate and, on the direct orders of Honduran armed forces commander Gen. Gustavo Alvarez Martínez, was executed by being thrown from a helicopter.

Caballero first surfaced in April 1987, when he spoke to several newspapers and, at greater length, to the human rights organization Americas Watch. Juan Mendez, director of the Washington office of Americas Watch, says he found Caballero "a very credible guy. As far as we have been able to verify, everything he has said checks out." Caballero described Battalion 316, which had been trained in intelligence methods by U.S. personnel, and said it was responsible for kidnapping and murdering nearly 200 suspected leftists between 1980 and 1984, many of them Salvadorans, while the Honduran Army was under Alvarez's command. And he detailed the torture techniques used against prisoners—electric shocks, the rubber hood called the *capucha*, near-drowning in barrels of water. In some of these reports, Caballero alluded to Carney's death but did not give details.

The persistent pursuit of the facts by Carney's family, especially his sister Eileen Connolly and her husband, Joe, makes them the heroes of this story. While the press's interest waned, the family pursued Caballero further, and in a conversation in Toronto, where the Honduran has taken refuge, its members finally found out what had happened to their brother. Parts of the meeting with Caballero were screened in a BBC television documentary on the *Everyman* program last November 22, and later by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Most of the interview was conducted by Eileen Connolly. She began by asking Caballero who was responsible for her brother's death.

> CABALLERO: The order came from General Gustavo Adolfo Alvarez Martínez.
>
> CONNOLLY: Directly?
>
> CABALLERO: Directly.
>
> CONNOLLY: O.K. And how did he die?
>
> CABALLERO: After he was detained at El Aguacate, he was being interrogated. I remained at El Aguacate, but according to those who were holding him, they took him in a helicopter to the mountains above the Rio Patuca.
>
> CONNOLLY: They took him alive?
>
> CABALLERO: They took him alive. They threw him out of the helicopter alive.

Before Carney's death, according to Caballero's account, the priest knelt down, made the sign of the cross and forgave his executioners. Caballero learned of this because "Lieutenant Segundo Flores Murillo talked about it. But he didn't tell it in a tragic way, but more as something like a kind of joke." Flores Murillo was one of the key officers in Battalion 316, reporting directly to one of its commanders, Maj. Alexander Hernandez, and he conducted most of the operations of which Caballero has direct knowledge.

But the Connollys had also heard rumors that Padre Guadalupe struggled when the soldiers went to throw him out of the helicopter. "Yes," Caballero replied, "that is what my comrades, my ex-comrades, told me when they talked about it. I didn't see it, but I believe that is what really happened. That's how it was." He went on to explain: "The first ones [of the captured guerrillas] were drowned in the river, and when they realized it was a lot of work to pick them up and put them in the helicopters just to throw them [the bodies] out again, they said that they would throw them from the helicopters alive."

There could be no doubt that Carney was captured alive, Caballero continued, because he "read part of his interrogation. It's in the archives in Tegucigalpa. They wanted to keep him alive to get information. He was very weak and sick, with a fever, but they didn't give him any medication, only drugs, tranquilizers, so that he would talk. Because General Alvarez Martínez, I repeat, had said beforehand that when he was arrested, when you capture Guadalupe or [the guerrilla commander José Maria] Reyes Mata, kill them after interrogation."

"You heard him say that?" Eileen Connolly asked.

"Yes, I heard it, because I was present at the planning group. Because I was in the intelligence and interrogation service, and I was going to take part in the operation."

Caballero said that U.S. personnel, including one man he knew only as "Mister Mike," were present at this planning

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meeting for Operation Patuca. He also said that although U.S. officials had told the Honduran military to avoid physical torture, they were well aware that the practice continued. "The clandestine houses and the command post of the squadron, that is 316 in our terms, the death squad, were visited by C.I.A. agents," Caballero said, adding that "there is not the slightest doubt" that the United States must have known of Carney's detention and execution, "because members of the C.I.A. and Pentagon instructors training the *contras* were at the place where he was held."

At work around the murder of Jim Carney was a familiar hierarchy of dirty hands, each level with its own powers of life and death. At the top was the powerful U.S. Ambassador in Tegucigalpa, Negroponte, who oversaw the transformation of Honduras from backwater to *contra* base between 1981 and 1985. Underneath him was General Alvarez, the fanatical commander of the armed forces. Negroponte ran the show and Alvarez gave the local orders; men like Hernandez and, until his defection, Caballero, were the on-scene operators.

It's a familiar pattern; the greater the power, the heavier the ethical responsibility, the cleaner the hands. Hernandez was a simple brute enforcer, working with a gang of former soldiers who had been jailed for violent crimes and whose sentences had been commuted, as in medieval Europe, in exchange for serving the state as executioners. Alvarez was a different kind of character. His ferocious anticommunism appealed to the U.S. Embassy; yet at the same time he unnerved it. There was a wildness there that was never quite under control.

Talking to Alvarez was a scary experience: The man was a bundle of nervous tics and sudden hand gestures, alternately self-aggrandizing, wheedling and sarcastic. I interviewed him in February 1984, just six weeks before his fellow officers put a gun to his head and packed him on a plane to Miami by way of Costa Rica. When I asked him how he could tell the Carneys about their brother's fate, he first exploded that they were only interested in the case because they wanted to collect the life insurance, and then, contemptuously, told me he would lend them a helicopter for their search, "along with a compass, so they don't get lost." That remark is more macabre in retrospect, given what we now know about Alvarez, helicopters and the death of Jim Carney.

Negroponte (Phillips Exeter; Yale, class of 1960) is another type still, a bureaucrat out of a Ward Just novel. He is a man with the unblinking eyes of a lizard, the kind who steeples his fingers a lot when he talks to you. Where Alvarez favored grunts and expletives, Negroponte was a master of diplomatic semantics, his conversation full of phrases like "in a sense" and "I would just suggest to you that" and "according to the best information available to me at this time."

Where are they now? Battalion 316 is still operating. Maj. Alexander Hernandez, a small-timer who conducts his affairs beneath the level of critical visibility, is running a new school for scoundrels, the FUSEP advanced police training facility in Tegucigalpa. Hernandez is a graduate of the old Office of Public Safety police training program, which was suspended in 1974 after years of controversy. But U.S. police aid to several Central American countries was reinstated in 1985, and in 1987 Honduran police received $3.4 million.

Alvarez lost his army but found Jesus—in a neat allegory of sin and redemption, he is now a born-again Pentecostal in Miami. It was not an immediate enlightenment. After his sacking as Commander in Chief in March 1984, he stayed in the Miami home of Honduran arms dealer Gerard Latchinian, a former business partner of Bay of Pigs veteran and Iran/*contra* scandal conspirator Max Gomez, a k a Felix Rodriguez. Then the Pentagon decided that Alvarez was an asset too precious to squander. In 1986 he was paid $50,000 for his work on a classified "sole-source" study of "low-intensity conflict" in Central America. Alvarez received another, undisclosed sum for a 1985 Rand Corporation paper on U.S. policy in the region. Those who found work for the unemployed general were Nestor Sanchez, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, and Fred Iklé, Under Secretary of Defense.

In keeping with the hierarchies that rule these affairs, it was Negroponte, the biggest fish, who swam farthest away from the scene of the crime. After his transfer from the Tegucigalpa embassy in May 1985, Negroponte was quietly shunted out of the public eye into an assistant secretaryship, where he dealt with such safe issues as the law of the sea, fisheries treaties and the ozone layer.

But now he's back, appointed at the end of November 1987 as President Reagan's deputy national security adviser. The return of Negroponte, who was associated with some of the foulest excesses of the *contra* war, is one of the most significant moves in the ongoing reshuffle of the Adminis-

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tration and a stunning illustration of how little was swept clean by the Iran/*contra* Congressional brush. The appointment also illuminates the poverty of Washington's institutional memory, since it passed almost without comment. Lou Cannon of *The Washington Post* gave it a few lines and a mug shot, over the caption, "Negroponte . . . viewed as tough-minded, efficient."

In its way, the Negroponte appointment was a brilliant stroke: Bring in Gen. Colin Powell, a new, affable national security adviser—and a black, to boot—to press the flesh on Capitol Hill. And behind him, quietly, introduce a hard-nosed Central America expert to orchestrate the next round of *contra* aid chicanery. Who better to torpedo the Arias plan? Honduras is the most fragile link in the chain of peace, and Negroponte knows the place and all its weak points like the back of his hand. (Don't forget, too, that Negroponte quit his job as Henry Kissinger's Vietnam expert on the National Security Council in protest over the 1973 Paris peace accords. Haitians may also be blanching at the news that Negroponte has joined Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams on an interagency group to map out the next stage of the Administration's Haiti policy.)

But this story is something more than a dismal parable of evil rewarded and truth silenced. The Carney family makes it more. At the simplest level, it was the relatives' persistence that made it possible for the smoking gun, finally, to appear. Beyond that, though their lives were blighted by the death of a brother—and by four bitter years of State Department stonewalling—they were also illuminated, and in a way empowered by the experience, even if official Washington now chooses to ignore Caballero's revelations as old news.

Joe and Eileen spend most of their time these days on human rights work; brother Pat has traveled to Honduras several times, and his wife, Barbara, has done volunteer work in Nicaragua. Sisters Virginia and Maureen make the rounds of church and solidarity groups in Michigan and California. Joe and Eileen have put as many as 10,000 people through the Christian leadership training programs they run. They'd like to see Christian base communities flourish in the United States as they have throughout Latin America. "We need a little *glasnost* and a little restructuring of our own here," Joe says, "both in the United States and inside the Catholic Church."

Since the death of Jim Carney, the family has become part of a web of connections that didn't exist before. It ties them to people like Ramon Custodio, director of the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Honduras, whose life has been threatened by Battalion 316; to countless church people in the U.S. sanctuary movement; to the Guatemalan refugees they have taken into their suburban St. Louis home.

"There's a dark side and a light side to all this," Joe says. "All the violence is only a response to the growing pressure from the bottom up for human rights." And even though the likes of Alvarez and Negroponte may be rewarded in the short term, he has come to believe that, "in the end, they're on the back side of history." ☐

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COMPROMISES OF A CANDIDATE

Benazir Bhutto Is Running Hard

LUCY KOMISAR

Benazir Bhutto is campaigning to be the leader of Pakistan. In the past months, her well-publicized arranged marriage to a Pakistani businessman, her forays into the hinterland to build support and enthusiasm and her party's competition for seats in local government have all been aimed at forging a public image and electoral machine that can help her wrest power from Gen. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, the man who deposed her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, in 1977, and had him hanged two years later.

Having learned a lesson from that bitter experience, which also led her to spend seven years either in jail or under house arrest, she is laying her plans carefully, seeking to neutralize the two forces she blames for her father's defeat: the army and the Americans. She has changed the populist philosophy of "Bhuttoism" into a virtual copy of government policy aimed at winning the support of those erstwhile enemies—or at least neutralizing their opposition.

Her trip last October to the small Punjabi town of Sialkot was a typical campaign outing. The red, black and green banners of the Pakistan People's Party (P.P.P.) stretched across the road, and young men shouting slogans ran alongside the white van atop which Benazir Bhutto sat. She waved at supporters, brushed off rose petals they had thrown at her and straightened the ivory veil that kept slipping off her black hair. Men lined the village road, some standing on boxes; the women peered from the windows or roofs of low brick and concrete buildings. In the background, a recording of traditional high-pitched flutes and wailing voices competed with the sound of motor scooters.

Bhutto was en route to a rally at a soccer stadium. Her supporters had come from as far as Lahore, three hours away. I saw some of them, in brightly painted trucks and buses, prevented from continuing along the route by police, who wanted to cut the size of the crowd.

During an interview at the villa of one of her supporters the day after that rally, she talked about her policies and strategies and acknowledged Washington's importance in her future. "Maybe if the Americans oppose me today, they can make things difficult for me, but they won't always have the interest as they do today," she explained. The U.S. "interest" is Zia's willingness to use Pakistan as a conduit for U.S. military aid to the mujahedeen fighting the Soviet-backed Afghan government. She aims to convince the United States she can be as reliable a strategic partner as the general. "Politics is not temporary; you have to look at the future," she said. "We need to deal with the U.S. government in the future when we are elected. So we would like to start off in a good way so that there is confidence and trust on both sides."

Bhutto, 34, left the country in 1984 for voluntary exile in England. She followed avidly the election of Philippine President Corazon Aquino and the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos in February 1986. Zia had ended martial law, imposed since he took power in 1977, at the beginning of the year, and Bhutto returned April 10 to crowds estimated in the millions, the largest in the subcontinent's history.

Elated, she started calling for elections to be held within a few months. But Zia insisted on the validity of the 1985 parliamentary elections, which had been held in February under martial law and with a ban on political parties. Bhutto responded with a call for demonstrations that summer. Black Day rallies commemorating Zia's July 5 seizure of power drew 100,000 people in Lahore, fewer than 50,000 in Karachi, and from a few thousand to 15,000 demonstrators elsewhere. In August, when Bhutto defied a government ban on another series of rallies, authorities arrested more than 400 opposition leaders. She was picked up after eluding police to lead a march of 10,000 in Karachi. Her supporters responded with demonstrations and rioting, attacking police stations, railroad lines and stations and government buildings, mostly in Sind.

Bhutto said "made-in-the-U.S.A." tear gas shells were fired on her marches. At least twenty-nine people were killed and thousands arrested. As Bhutto was led away, she promised action by 150,000 "doves of democracy," P.P.P. shock troops expected to bring the country to a halt if anything happened to her. However, "people power" in Pakistan turned out to be a fiction.

As journalist Ayaz Amir, a P.P.P. member who was jailed twice under martial law, explained, "The enthusiasm of the people hadn't been set aflame. When people come into the streets to face the brutality of the state, they must do it for something. People are not going to face bullets for Bhuttoism."

That experience made Bhutto more cautious. If she couldn't win power through mass action, she would do it through elections. This meant establishing a policy that would mollify the potential obstacles to power—the military, the United States and the businessmen.

Her efforts to placate the army often seem exaggerated. For example, in her speech at Sialkot, shouting into the microphone and gesturing with her arms, she protested the loss to India of the Siachen Glacier on their disputed border. A P.P.P. leader called it "a rock of ice so obscure that two platoons of the Pakistani Army were firing at each other for three months before they realized it. She mentions it in every speech in the Punjab. She wants soldiers to feel she is for a strong military. She never says anything to annoy the army." Bhutto's warmer attitude toward Washington is also important to the generals who want U.S. arms and other military aid.

Lucy Komisar is a New York City–based journalist who writes on foreign affairs. Her book, Corazon Aquino: The Story of a Revolution, *was published last year by George Braziller.*

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Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had made aggressive speeches against the United States, especially during his last years, and Benazir says Washington caused her father's downfall because of its opposition to his nuclear reprocessing plant agreement with France. The Carter Administration, in an effort to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, had pressed France not to sell Pakistan a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant that could extract weapons-grade plutonium from spent reactor fuel rods used at its power plant in Karachi. It made the same demand to West Germany, which had agreed to sell nuclear power plants and uranium-enrichment and reprocessing equipment to Brazil. "I do believe that the C.I.A. destabilized our government in 1977, but I don't say that they were responsible for the execution," Benazir said.

However, most P.P.P. members believe the United States did play a role in Bhutto's death. Journalist Amir points out, "On the morning he was hanged, a cable from the Islamabad embassy to the U.S. State Department said that, 'His body has been buried and hopefully his legend has been buried with his body. The business climate should improve considerably.'" The cable was published by Iran along with other papers it seized from the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, which had apparently received a copy.

Salmaan Taseer, a member of the P.P.P. Central Committee, said, "There is no doubt the Americans were involved in the removal of Mr. Bhutto's government and his execution." He noted that the United States suspended aid only after Bhutto's execution and made it clear it was because of the atomic energy program.

Like other critics of the present regime, Bhutto criticizes the United States for keeping Zia in power, though she makes the charge only obliquely. "The people of Pakistan feel that if it had not been for the geostrategic interests relating to Afghanistan in particular, perhaps we would not have had this dictatorship," she said. "Perhaps we could have had a return to democracy."

But Bhutto now praises Washington for pressing for democratization. "The U.S. has recently given statements welcoming the transition, called it a transition rather than a democracy, called for my release [and] expressed concern when the use of force was indulged in. These are welcome signs."

Bhutto had never said much about the war in Afghanistan. Her mother, Nusrat, who emerged as the Pakistan People's Party spokesperson after her husband's death, made a strong statement in 1980 that Pakistan should recognize the Afghan government and talk directly to it. Now, Benazir says what Zia says—that the Russians should withdraw. "Democratic Pakistan would want a political solution which leads to the earliest withdrawal of Soviet troops and the return of the Afghan refugees, but we want such a solution guaranteed by both superpowers, failing which we don't think it would be successful."

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"The change in the Afghan policy is because of the Americans," a P.P.P. leader explained. "She [Bhutto] accepts the fact that the Americans have a big stake in the Afghan war and that if she opposes that war, the Americans would not tolerate it. It has caused us to suffer a lot because of that. There is a dispute in the party over Benazir's position. Our political workers are very anti-American."

Reflecting the attitude of many on the left in the P.P.P., Taseer says, "We should get out of the war in Afghanistan, kick the mujahedeen back where they belong, because the price we are paying is absolutely disastrous. We have explosions every day. A huge refugee problem is disturbing the economy, prices, destabilizing the country. We are the biggest heroin dealers in the world." He was referring to the bombs believed to be set off by Afghan and Soviet agents, which have killed hundreds of Pakistanis in the past few years, to the more than 3 million Afghan refugees settled in camps along the border and to the increased heroin traffic, attributed to the Afghans.

The P.P.P. leftists blame the United States for dragging Pakistan into this mess. Looking toward her election, Bhutto is trying to curb the anti-American sentiment in her party and has ordered her supporters not to burn American flags or shout anti-American slogans at demonstrations.

Along the route of her motorcade in Sialkot—which passed two American-flag burners—I asked men in the traditional garb of long shirts over baggy trousers why they supported Bhutto. They invariably answered by talking about her father. Usually, they said he had helped the poor. In fact, by the time her father was deposed, the P.P.P. had fallen under the domination of feudal landlords. The radicals in the party hoped that when Bhutto returned from exile she would refurbish its ideology. But, to win the support of the landlords and business interests, she has not raised issues of land reform or workers' rights. There is little debate on economic matters, unlike in the early 1970s, a time of widespread nationalizations.

Amir says Bhutto believes in the policies she espouses. "She is not a radical firebrand. The Benazir that you see is the Benazir there is. I think she's playing up to the Americans, but it's not going against the grain of her temperament."

Bhutto's lack of social radicalism is tailored to fit the mood of the times. There is much less economic discontent than there was in her father's day. Remittances from Pakistani workers in the Persian Gulf and U.S. aid, plus wealth generated by illegal heroin and arms sales, have helped create a lower middle class. Most Pakistanis have enough to eat. Beggars are a rare sight.

Bhutto considers herself a social democrat. "When the P.P.P. was first formed, there were all sorts of elements in it from Marxists to right-wingers to populists to radicals to social democrats," she told me. "Twenty years later, we are trying to give it a more clear ideological mooring or direction. That ideological mooring is left of center, or social democratic."

But for all her social democracy, she refuses to acknowledge that her father was autocratic or suppressed his

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political opponents. "I think my father was the biggest democrat Pakistan has ever produced," she insists. "When people say they were beaten up, I don't deny there may have been isolated incidents. But in England or America if a Cabinet minister does a wrong, it doesn't fall on the President or Prime Minister."

In a party reorganization upon her return to Pakistan, Bhutto cut out the people who had worked with her father, "the uncles," some of whom thought the mantle should fall on them, and picked a new, young coterie. But the P.P.P. is no more democratic now than it was in her father's time. It is built around the personality of the Bhutto family, around Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's martyrdom and personal charisma. "Basically, its Benazir's personal party," said a P.P.P. leader. "We attend party meetings, she tells us what's happening, we shake hands and [say] goodbye. There's no voting on issues. There's a low political culture here. You can't get up and make a proposal to the house, 'We'd like to vote on whether we should pursue a pro-American policy.'"

Zia's critics have expressed doubts that he would permit a national election if it looked as if Bhutto could win. But local elections held last November 30, the first since the end of martial law, might encourage him to go ahead with voting for national and provincial assemblies, which the Constitution requires to be held by 1990.

Although none of the political parties could participate officially in the November 30 elections, unofficially they supported many of the candidates for the 75,000 local offices, and the Zia regime was pleased by the results. People linked to the governing party, the Pakistani Muslim League (P.M.L.), won a large majority of the contests, especially in rural areas, where many of its candidates were incumbents or traditional power figures who ran unopposed. The P.P.P. did well only in rural Sind, a party stronghold, and took less than 20 percent of the seats nationally. P.M.L.-supported candidates dominated the Punjab, the biggest, most important province, taking 70 percent of the rural seats and majorities in the cities. The Sind capital, Karachi, will be run by the ethnic Muhajir Qaumi Movement, which represents the Indian-born Moslems who immigrated to Pakistan at partition.

The best Bhutto can say is that her party was confirmed as the only significant opposition—the smaller parties virtually disappeared and the fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami Party barely survived—and that its poorly structured organization got valuable experience. And those local elections may be no guide to what would happen in a parliamentary contest several years from now.

But even if Bhutto loses the next election, she is prepared to wait. "I'm a young person," she told me. She appears to be banking her political future on Washington's willingness to accept her in power. "For me to be elected, I don't need to think of the near future, I can think of the far future, too. America is not always going to have the Afghan situation or the Iran-gulf situation. We had the flashpoints in the Middle East, the flashpoints in Vietnam . . . the flashpoint keeps shifting, so I'm not so naïve as to believe that I can never come into power." □

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THE DEREGULATORY AGENCY

O.M.B.'s Chokehold On Government

MARK A. PINSKY

When the Reagan Administration went to war not only on specific government regulations but on the regulatory process itself, the Office of Management and Budget provided the weapon. "O.M.B. has become the meat ax," says Gary Bass, director of OMB Watch, a public-interest group. "It can bypass Congress and the courts and go straight into the agencies to do its work. It's Reagan's best tool."

O.M.B. controls the flow of public information within and from the government. Its Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs passes final judgment—there is no appeals process short of filing suit—on whether proposed information gathering by Cabinet departments and executive-branch agencies is of "practical utility." This loosely worded authority is defined by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 and by two subsequent executive orders issued by President Reagan.

The Paperwork Reduction Act was passed by the Democratic-controlled Ninety-sixth Congress at the urging of lame-duck President Jimmy Carter. Its aim was to streamline information gathering, giving O.M.B. the job of determining the need for almost all government knowledge, ranging from census data to tax information and scientific research results. Stuart Eizenstat, Carter's domestic policy adviser, recalls that the act was intended "to reduce the amount of paperwork, to eliminate duplicative forms and to simplify forms."

Reagan's two executive orders embodied a creative—some say illegal—interpretation of the act's purpose. Executive Order 12291 was promulgated in 1981 to subject all regulatory proposals to cost-benefit analysis. Executive Order 12498, issued in 1985, requires that proposed regulations and pre-rule-making activities conform with Administration policies. (O.M.B. now interprets this to mean information collecting.)

The widespread use of cost-benefit tests under Executive Order 12291 has undermined the rule-making process, but Federal courts have repeatedly rebuffed O.M.B.'s actions on appeal. For example, the Environmental Protection Agency used a cost-benefit test in setting an air pollution safety standard for vinyl chloride, a carcinogen linked to liver cancers. But a U.S. Court of Appeals ruled unanimously in 1987 that the E.P.A.'s legislative mandate requires it to consider only health and not cost. The decision was written by Judge Robert Bork, who is not known for liberal readings of the law. The same court rejected the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's attempt in 1985 to base minimum plant safety standards in part on cost.

Under the second executive order (which can be called the Ginsburg test, because it was the brainchild of Judge Douglas Ginsburg, who ran the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs from July 1984 to August 1985), any planned agency activity found to be inconsistent with the President's "policies and priorities" can be shut down in secrecy. In a 1986 *Harvard Law Review* commentary on Executive Order 12498, Alan Morrison, a leading public-interest lawyer, warned, "For OMB, without any public input, to prevent an agency from conducting a preliminary investigation is the height or irrationality—unless one defines rationality as the abhorrence of all regulation." He accused O.M.B. of "the greatest perversion of the principle of open government."

One indication of the importance of the little-known Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs is the careers it has launched. OIRA's first administrator, James Miller 3d, left to head the Federal Trade Commission and is now director of O.M.B.; Christopher DeMuth, Miller's successor, currently runs the American Enterprise Institute; Douglas Ginsburg went from O.M.B. to the Justice Department before his aborted nomination to the Supreme Court; and current OIRA boss Wendy Gramm was recently nominated to head the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, whose role in regulating futures contracts on stock index prices is being hotly debated.

Sometimes O.M.B.'s chokehold on information flow merely limits government activities; but at its worst, it suppresses types of information that in the past may have led to the recall of drugs and other products, enabled entrepreneurs to compete with corporate giants and inspired numerous regulations in the public interest. A recent, controversial example concerns the 1980 census. O.M.B. recommended in August 1987 that the Census Bureau delete traditional questions about housing, unemployment, part-time work, fertility and migration from this year's pre-test of the census. A month later, in response to strong opposition from city and state officials who receive Federal aid for housing and health care on the basis of census data, as well as from members of Congress, O.M.B. withdrew most of its recommendations. But while the Census Bureau had quickly implemented O.M.B.'s suggested revisions of its survey form when faced with an O.M.B. ultimatum, O.M.B. delayed its change of heart until the bureau's late-September deadline was long past, thus endangering the 1988 pre-test and the validity of the full 1990 census survey. While appearing responsive to public outcry, O.M.B. has in fact obstructed the census, a maneuver that is all too characteristic of its interactions with other Federal agencies.

The Reagan Administration has singled out social programs, environmental and occupational health, employment data and education for "regulatory interruptus." An OMB Watch survey of all O.M.B. decisions on regulatory proposals for 1984 through 1986 under Executive Order 12291 reveals that the Reaganites were twice as likely to approve planned rules from the Department of Justice

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(93.5 percent approved without modification the first time around) and the Treasury (80.9 percent) as those from the Department of Labor (40.3 percent). Proposals from the Departments of Education (57.1 percent approved), Housing and Urban Development (59 percent), Health and Human Services (64.8 percent), Commerce (65.3 percent) and the E.P.A. (69.4 percent) also fared relatively badly.

Many of the agencies and departments that suffered the highest rates of rejection also showed sharp decreases in the number of proposals submitted in 1986 compared with 1981, according to another OMB Watch analysis. The E.P.A., for example, submitted 734 notices of regulatory actions in 1981 but just 197 in 1986. The decreased activity suggests that the O.M.B. has intimidated E.P.A. officials. It may also reflect the Reagan Administration's staffing of regulatory agencies with personnel who oppose some or all rules, on ideological grounds. The Labor Department, whose proposals had the lowest rate of approval of any agency, dropped from 83 submissions in 1981 to 56 in 1986, and the Transportation Department went from 285 to 196 in that time. Overall, O.M.B. rejected or required modifications on just 12.7 percent of proposals submitted by all agencies and departments in 1981, but it turned down 31.7 percent of them in 1986.

In some instances, however, O.M.B. was asleep at the switch. In January 1987, the Internal Revenue Service issued a revised, O.M.B.-approved W-4 form for determining employer tax withholding based on the 1986 overhaul of the tax code. The form proved unpopular among accountants, the general public and Congress. The I.R.S. went back to the drawing board and, with O.M.B.'s help, produced a much better one. Today, the W-4 affair can be cited both as one of O.M.B.'s most visible errors of omission and one of its clearest successes in improving information collection.

This Administration has been determined to roll back the regulatory gains of the 1960s and 1970s, nowhere more than in the fields of environmental and occupational health. A report prepared in 1986 for Representative John Dingell, chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, found that O.M.B. had rejected seven times as many proposed studies on environmental or occupational health as on other public health topics. The report charged that O.M.B. had based its rejections on the opinions of just one or two of its own reviewers, in contrast to the scientific peer review all the public health proposals had traditionally undergone.

Critics frequently charge that O.M.B. relies on experts from industry rather than from government or the academy. A blatant example is its treatment of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study of the possible reproductive risks associated with video display terminals. Soon after the study plan was first presented to O.M.B., in fall 1985, BellSouth, one of the telecommunications companies whose employees were part of the study, approached O.M.B. for guidance on submitting comments on it. According to a BellSouth official who asked to remain anonymous, O.M.B. staffers directed the company to Dr. Brian MacMahon of the Harvard University School of Public Health, who has served on several NIOSH peer review panels and whose opinions were respected at O.M.B. BellSouth soon contracted to pay MacMahon to critique the NIOSH study protocol, which he did with the aid of a colleague, Dr. Sally Zierler.

MacMahon and Zierler found five major flaws in the NIOSH study plan, three of which O.M.B. repeated in its initial rejection notice in December 1985. An O.M.B. spokeswoman, apparently unaware that O.M.B. had referred BellSouth to MacMahon, said at the time that the MacMahon-Zierler analysis influenced the decision. "Part of what made BellSouth's comments cogent was the inclusion of a critique by a well-respected epidemiologist," she said. NIOSH did not learn until eleven days after the fact that the study plan had been rejected—and the news came from BellSouth, not from O.M.B., adding indignity to defeat. NIOSH redrafted and resubmitted the protocol, which was again blasted by MacMahon and Zierler. O.M.B. finally approved the plan, with stiff restrictions, in June 1986.

Although an increasingly convincing body of research data suggests that VDTs may cause problems in pregnancy, including miscarriages and fetal malformations, lead researcher Dr. Teresa Schnorr and her NIOSH colleagues had to delete sections of the study questionnaire dealing with stress on the job and with workers' fertility in order to gain O.M.B. approval. The study started in fall 1987, but its results, when they are released in late 1988 or early 1989, will almost certainly not tell us anything new, or support new regulations. Even O.M.B. director Miller concedes that the study results will require a follow-up, presumably costing at least as much as the estimated $450,000 it will take to complete the current inquiry.

"There is a real role for O.M.B. in regulatory and research review," concedes watchdog Bass. Indeed, there is

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widespread agreement that O.M.B. oversight does help control the sprawling government. O.M.B. officials describe their successes in terms of a reduced burden of paper work on the public—600 million hours saved annually since 1981. Asked to cite specific improvements in programs, O.M.B. gave six examples, including I.R.S. form W-4, the 1988 census pre-test and the forms required by the Immigration Reform Act of 1986.

"Have there been abuses by O.M.B.? Absolutely," concedes Bob Coakley, an aide to Senator Lawton Chiles, an original sponsor and strong defender of the Paperwork Reduction Act. "But you have to put it in context. Have there also been abuses by agencies? Absolutely. And the larger problems are in the agencies." Coakley contends that OMB Watch's statistics merely reflect agency laxness, forcing O.M.B. to get tough.

Combating O.M.B. abuses has proved difficult, since Congressional opponents lack the votes to restrict the use of Executive Orders 12291 and 12498. Further, the orders enjoy the support of the American Bar Association and many business lobbies. In 1986, Representative Dingell led an effort to defund the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the House version of the appropriations bill for fiscal 1987. But when the Senate failed to pass an O.M.B. appropriations bill, Senator Chiles led a successful push to re-authorize the regulatory and information-collection review programs for three years, restoring O.M.B. funding through a back door. The resulting compromise tightens Congressional control over O.M.B., but it ignores O.M.B.'s political manipulations.

O.M.B. opponents also asked a Federal court to declare the executive orders illegal. In *Public Citizen Health Research Group v. Rowland*, five House chairs—Dingell, Jack Brooks of the Government Operations Committee, Peter Rodino of the Judiciary Committee, Augustus Hawkins of the Education and Labor Committee and William Ford of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee—charged in an amicus curiae brief that O.M.B. illegally interfered in the promulgation of a proposed Labor Department standard to protect workers from exposure to ethylene oxide, a deadly gas. In 1985 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ordered Labor to revise the regulation but did not address the issues the Congressmen had raised.

Congressional opponents hope that a future President—who does not share what Morrison calls Reagan's "myopic vision of the regulatory process, which places the elimination of cost to industry above all other considerations"—will rescind the executive orders. But most observers believe that future administrations will continue to extend O.M.B.'s powers over agencies and departments. Warns Morrison, "This system . . . places the ultimate decisions in the hands of O.M.B. personnel, who are neither competent in the substantive areas of regulation nor accountable to Congress or the electorate in any meaningful sense." □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 74*)

in 1957 because of its tremendous economic power. The membership of the I.B.T. controlled distribution of goods, and without them, all U.S. capital was latent capital. Therefore, at the behest of the McClellan Congressional committee, in which Robert Kennedy played a key role, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. leadership succumbed to a government anti-union witch hunt and expelled the I.B.T. In exchange for this action the McClellan committee concluded its investigation of the corruption aspects of organized labor, and focused instead on Communist influence within the labor movement. And so, for thirty long years, the teamsters have served as scapegoats for the entire labor movement, while corruption within the A.F.L.-C.I.O. has been allowed to flourish and leadership with right-wing policies has gone unchallenged.

The I.B.T. is anything but a baneful influence on the A.F.L.-C.I.O. In fact, a merger will save unions money, will strengthen organizing drives, reduce jurisdictional disputes and will allow for greater cooperation on the key issues facing trade unions in America: flight of capital, overproduction, plant closures, subminimum wages, bankruptcies, foreclosures and a lack of effective leadership to address these problems. Change is already occurring in many cities and states. On Sunday last November 11, 2,000 rank-and-file leaders of the I.B.T. met in Detroit to plan a strategy to oppose the Justice Department's plan to seize control of their union. In California, members of Watsonville Local 912 struck for over a year against the frozen-food processors to obtain a just and economically sound contract. They continued their strike in the face of widespread police repression and company intimidation. Teamsters Joint Council 7 and the international union spent as much as $45 million to win the strike, according to a recent article in *Food Engineering*, a journal of the processed food industry. This sounds like a very appropriate use for "the mess of dues" extracted from teamster members.

On April 25 of last year you could not help but notice the large teamster contingents marching side by side with their brothers and sisters from the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers at the nonintervention demonstration in San Francisco. In Los Angeles several teamster locals have endorsed the need for a comprehensive nuclear weapons ban and are major players in the trade union organization for a comprehensive nuclear weapons test ban.

The teamsters has its share of rotten apples, and so does the A.F.L.-C.I.O. That is certainly baneful and will remain until the capitalist system is uprooted. Class collaboration is a fact of life under capitalism. However, it should not be the excuse for attacking the merger of our long-divided rank and file. We belong together in one federation, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. And while we are at it, let's bring back the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, the United Mine Workers and the I.L.W.U. Then we can deal effectively with the "most repressive, bureaucratic and anachronistic elements of American labor." *Joseph F. Hancock*

Nostalgia for the brave promises of prewar trade unionism should not obscure the very real failures of the late-century movement. The excellent Labor Notes, *in its December 1987 issue, quotes Leo Huberman's naïve prediction that the triumph of the C.I.O. would rid unionism of racketeering. "Industrial unions . . . are by their very nature democratic and unselfish in that they seek to unite all workers. . . . [They] have made a real effort to develop genuine democracy—with the result that racketeering cannot flourish there," the great Marxist economic analyst wrote.*

Insofar as the teamsters is an industrial union, it completely contradicts Huberman's thesis. Only a purblind sentimentalist would claim that democracy can coexist with corruption in such measure as the teamsters' union contains. It is not the "political views" of the teamsters that makes the union undem-

(*Continued on Page 104*)

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

The Tight-Money Men

TIM METZ

SECRETS OF THE TEMPLE: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country. *By William Greider. Simon & Schuster. 798 pp. $24.95.*

If important political books are those that powerfully argue the fundamental questions that trouble the body politic, then William Greider's *Secrets of the Temple* may be the most important political book of the 1980s. Among the questions Greider raises are these: Just who is hurt by inflation? Who was helped most by Paul Volcker and the Federal Reserve's fight against it? Did the Fed and Volcker make America pay too dearly for the victory they achieved?

Greider's answers seem certain to fan intense debate during the election year ahead, for he argues persuasively that Volcker's crusade to eradicate inflation, which began in late 1979, was misguided, and that the Fed deliberately thrust the nation into a punishing thirty-three-month recession. Greider also contends that whether it was managing the nation's money supply, rescuing teetering banks or restructuring Third World debt, the Fed under Paul Volcker consistently opted for policies that favored lenders over debtors, large banks over small, the minority over the majority and the rich over the poor.

In the fall of 1979, Jimmy Carter had reluctantly appointed the conservative, austere and intellectually intimidating Mr. Volcker to head the Federal Reserve Board. Volcker began his seven-and-a-half-year reign amid mounting terror about the double-digit inflation that many feared would soon bankrupt retirees and turn the United States, financially at least, into a banana republic. Somewhat cynically, as Greider shows, Volcker chose monetarism as his weapon to slay the inflationary dragon. Before the advent of monetarism, the Fed had manipulated the nation's economy by adjusting interest rates directly in a series of "judgment calls." The idea was to adjust rates according to various economic circumstances and thus avoid spurring runaway inflation on the one hand or triggering a recession on the other. Naturally, under this system the Fed's moves on interest rates were both highly subjective and highly visible.

Volcker considered the Fed's traditional mode of operation less than ideal for a meaningful fight against inflation. It was clear to him that only by inflicting pain on society could the fires of inflation be quenched. But it was also unlikely that Fed board members would tolerate the political heat that would surely accompany such punishment. If, on the other hand, the economic pain could somehow be automatically inflicted through a process seemingly unconnected to the judgments of specific individuals at the Fed, then no one could blame its board members. Archconservative University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman had long preached reliance on just such a process—monetarism.

According to Friedman's teachings, if the Fed expanded the money supply too rapidly (by buying too many Treasury bonds and paying with cash, or by excessive direct lending to banks), then money would become too cheap and inflation would surely result. Conversely, if the Fed supplied too little money (by means of selling too many Treasury securities and taking the money it received for them out of circulation), borrowers eventually would bid interest rates high enough to choke off economic activity and plunge the economy into recession.

So, as the monetarists saw it, the idea was for the Fed to set rational targets for growth in the nation's money supply—the sum total of all the money in Americans' pockets as well as in bank accounts, money market funds and the like. After that, it was simply a matter of the Fed adding reserves to the system or draining them from it in order to keep the money supply within its predetermined targets.

To stop inflation, interest rates would of course have to climb high enough to throttle down the economy. Everyone involved knew that. So, the political beauty of monetarism was in its depersonalizing this process. Monetarism would keep the political heat of raising interest rates off the Fed—for under monetarism, the rates would soar not because the Federal Reserve Board had specifically decreed it but rather because foolish borrowers bid up the price of the available supply of money.

And so on October 6, 1979, Volcker got the Federal Reserve Board to embrace the monetarist formula. And he worked tirelessly to hold the board to that formula through thin and thinner over the next three years. At one point in 1980, borrowers were paying banks interest rates above 20 percent, or nearly double the inflation rate at the time. At that point, real interest rates—that is, prevailing interest rates minus the inflation rate—were four times the 2 percent they had averaged in this century. And Volcker, raising the spectre of resumed hyperinflation in virtually every public forum, helped keep real rates about that high, right up to his resignation last August.

For the lenders of the world—banks and bondholders, principally—the Fed's tight-money war on inflation was the answer to their prayers. The day of reckoning had come for borrowers, and lenders could at last reclaim the profits denied them during the hyperinflation of the 1970s, when borrowers who had been lent dollars gleefully repaid dollarettes. After all, Greider repeatedly contends, except for the poor without access to Social Security, lenders are the only people hurt more than they are helped by inflation. Farmers, homeowners, businessmen, consumers, wage and salary earners all benefited far more than they were hurt in the inflationary surge of the late 1970s. Rising prices meant higher profits and better access to credit for farmers and businessmen. Rising pay took the sting out of price rises for the consumer. The only loser was the lender. The money he received from borrowers would be worth less than the money he lent them.

Volcker's assault on inflation turned the tables on the majority of Americans, however. Not only would borrowers henceforth be denied inflation's windfalls but creditors would be allowed to drain them of their financial lifeblood throughout the 1980s.

And this in a society already marked by the immense concentration of wealth in very few hands. What Greider calls the

Tim Metz writes on markets for The Wall Street Journal. *He is currently on leave, working on a book about the stock market crash.*

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"vast behavior modification program" being operated by the Fed in its fight against inflation was steadily widening the disparity between rich and poor. For, thanks to the graduated income tax, the campaign's specific objective—to price borrowers out of the market—hit the smallest and weakest borrowers first and hardest, he notes.

> A corporation saved, for instance, 46 percent of its interest costs on its tax bill. A wealthy individual, paying the maximum tax rate, would recover 50 percent of his interest payments as a tax savings or as much as 70 percent if all his income was from stocks and bonds and other investments.

Greider argues that what the Fed was in effect sanctioning—through its tight money policy amid declining price inflation—was usury. "The biblical meaning of usury defined the obligations of those who had accumulated wealth toward others who had none and were in need. It imposed limits on the power that the wealthy could exercise, through lending, over the poor." By 1980, with inflation soaring, "the moral argument was reversed," Greider writes. In the political debate over the Federal law that wiped out interest limits on loans in the United States, creditors were portrayed "as the victims, the virtuous citizens who were exploited," he adds. "Borrowers were described as morally suspect—people who did not themselves save, whose 'speculative' spending was 'subsidized' by the virtuous savers."

And in a supreme irony, the Fed's program to wipe out inflation by pricing borrowers out of the market helped instead to spur the biggest borrowing binge in U.S. history.

> The debt explosion was driven substantially by Paul Volcker's own strategy or monetary policy. The high real interest rates, though intended to restrain, actually forced many to borrow more and more, just to keep up with their old debts. This was as true for the debt-burdened farmers and oil drillers as it was for the Third World countries of Latin America. For that matter, it was also true for the U.S. government. As a practical matter, many borrowers had no choice but to borrow more, even if they knew the added debt was imprudent and the interest costs were exorbitant. Not to borrow meant going under.

Greider notes that the inflation crusade also had an ancillary effect—driving up the value of the dollar—that magnified the agony it imposed on the nation. U.S. farmers were quickly priced out of export markets. So were manufacturers, who also suffered awesome losses in the domestic market to foreign companies, whose product prices between 1981 and 1985 ever more deeply undercut those of American manufacturers. The latter were driven to the wall, fell victim to takeovers or were forced into savage cost-cutting, restructuring, plant closings and layoffs to survive.

While Greider doesn't cite them, studies by the Commerce Department and the Business Roundtable show that 10.8 million American factory workers were laid off indefinitely between 1981 and 1986 because their plants were closed, and 600,000 middle- and upper-level managers have lost their jobs since 1984 in the aftermath of takeovers.

For the record, it should be noted that while *Secrets of the Temple* wasn't published until long after last year's October 19 stock market crash, the galley proofs released in July contained a chillingly prescient six-page discussion of economic and market woes that in effect predicted just such a crash.

While Greider's book is clearly and eloquently written, it's far from flawless. He is evidently too powerful a personality to be reined in by his editor; the book could easily shed 150 pages by simply eliminating its repetitions. But its flaws aren't likely to make anybody put it down. For one thing, it might well help write both major parties' 1988 platforms. It also might revive discussion of "Economic Justice for All," the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' provocative 1986 application of Catholic social teaching to the U.S. economy. For, like social justice:

> The money question was, as always, a question of values. It depended entirely on what mattered most to the society. If stable money was the nation's first and most important goal, if avoiding the risk of price inflation came before everything else, then Paul Volcker and the Federal Reserve had accomplished the society's highest purpose. But, if only money mattered, then all else must count for less. Jobs, production, home ownership, industrial development, an equitable distribution of incomes and wealth—all of society's competing economic objectives would suffer the consequences of placing money first, as indeed they did. When all the collateral costs were added up, the Federal Reserve's single-minded triumph proved to be quite expensive. □

FILMS.

JAMES LARDNER

Broadcast News
Wall Street

James Brooks, the writer and director of *Broadcast News*, has said that he intended to make a romantic comedy rather than a social commentary, and through most of the movie his observations of the milieu have a nicely incidental flavor: This is how things are, he is saying, make of them what you will. An aggressive producer warns a recalcitrant underling that she'll "fry" his "fat ass" unless he comes through with a certain interview, and her boss, looking on, exclaims, "I had *no idea* she was that good!" The bureau chief's teen-age daughter goes into an ecstatic swoon on meeting a blond would-be anchorman but fails to recognize a far more capable, but unprepossessing, reporter with whom she once went on a fourteen-day raft trip.

These are funny and telling moments of the sort you'd expect to find in a Frederick Wiseman documentary, if a network news operation were ever so foolish as to let Wiseman (the maker of *High School*, *Law and Order* and other portraits of inbred, institutional worlds) in the door. One did let James Brooks in the door, obviously, and he took plenty of notes. His movie, moreover, wears its research well; apart from a few brief slides back into the land of the half-hour sitcom (from which he emigrated not too long ago), the work scenes fit the characters and the story as closely as they fit the setting.

Reduced to its essentials, the premise of *Broadcast News*—a good-looking bubblehead and a serious reporter vie for the affections of a workaholic producer—sounds like a formulaic answer to a request for a love story with a TV news background. But Brooks has endowed these characters with more than the usual quota of ambiguity, and William Hurt, Albert Brooks (not related to the director) and Holly Hunter play their parts with zest as well as conviction; the script seems to have come as a happy shock to all three actors. What's more, it's far from clear to the audience for which pairing, if either, we ought to root.

Hunter is an inspired choice for the producer, Jane Craig; small (5 foot 2),

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with a sing-songy Georgia accent and a lot of restless energy, she is an actress we can imagine as something other than an actress. (Faye Dunaway, who played a producer in *Network*, suffered from the liability of looking—and carrying herself—like a woman destined to be in front of the camera rather than behind it.) William Hurt is also a sharp piece of casting as Tom Grunick, a sportscaster-turned-newscaster who can't believe his good fortune. He's easygoing, unassertive and the right kind of handsome; and just as Hunter doesn't seem to be hung up on projecting starlike grace, Hurt isn't hung up on projecting starlike intelligence, although he's a smart enough actor to play a slow-witted character without making an idiot of him.

Early in the movie, Jane Craig gives a speech to a group of local broadcasters in which she denounces her profession's infatuation with show business and, in particular, with user-friendly reporters and anchors who haven't got much upstairs. Then she meets Tom Grunick, the epitome of the species. She wants to have the same contempt for him in the flesh as in the abstract, but certain physical urges get in the way. Besides, he's not as bad as he seems; he admits his shortcomings and remembers to say thanks to those—notably, Jane herself—who help him put up a good on-camera front. When the network decides to do an instant special on a military crisis in the Gulf of Sidra, Tom is named anchor and Jane producer. Taking her boss aside, she pleads with him to give the anchor's role to her reporter buddy Aaron Altman (the Albert Brooks character), who has been to Libya and can think on his feet. But her plea is ignored—the higher-ups see Tom as star material—and, in one of the movie's best scenes, Jane manipulates Tom from the control room, feeding information to him through an earpiece while he conducts a series of apparently assured and informed interviews with people in the field. After the show, Tom tells her what a thrill it was to have her inside his head; the rhythm of her promptings and his questions, he says, was like "great sex." Jane won't admit it, but it was like that for her, too. With Hunter and Hurt in the roles, we understand why this slow-footed, intellectually insecure guy is so captivated by this female dynamo and why this workaholic woman, who has told herself not to expect too much in the romance department, is so pleasantly taken aback by this look-

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Scandinavia	Airfare 2 Weeks, Hotel*	$ 499	$ 803
Tokyo	Airfare Only	$ 627	$ 851
Hong Kong	Airfare Only	$ 660	$ 850
Bahamas Cruise	5 Day Cruise*	$ 385	$ 585
Caribbean Cruise	Airfare 1 Week Cruise*	$ 540	$1040
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er's attentions—and by the idea that her professional skills might, with him, be social skills.

Work is more than a background for these characters. Take away their jobs and they would have nothing to say to each other, and nowhere to go. This is not only a plausible description of such a relationship in the movie's chosen context but a great relief in the context of recent movies. For once, we get to watch two people fall in love (more or less) without going through one of those gauzy, touristic montage sequences—walks on the beach, shopping sprees, drives in the country, etc.—with which Hollywood is wont to camouflage its ignorance of the human heart. For once, too, we hear a couple *talk* to each other, instead of seeing their lips move to heavy musical accompaniment. The chummy partnership between Jane and Aaron, played with a nice edge by Albert Brooks, is equally believable. Friendship, like love, is a state of affairs that the movies have had a hard time with. *Broadcast News* gets them both right.

When a movie has such unusual strengths, you want to be swept away by it, and you feel almost churlish about admitting you weren't. Having laid out the territory so splendidly, however, Brooks never quite decides where to go with his story, and in the clutch he loses faith in his game plan of keeping the personal relationships front and center. Tom does a piece on date rape. ("He's blowing the lid off nookie," Aaron says contemptuously.) In the middle of a victim's weeping testimony, the piece cuts to a sympathetic tear falling from Tom's eye. Later, it develops that the cutaway was added after the original interview—that Tom made himself cry in order to juice up the story. It's a good sequence. Unfortunately, Brooks tries to pivot the story on it. Tom's "incredible breach of ethics," as Jane calls it, becomes central.

Suddenly, Jane, Tom and Aaron are propelled into a series of confrontational scenes that seem far more intent on ending the movie than on working out these three characters' feelings for one another. Brooks means for the date-rape controversy to clarify things, but it diminishes them. And by homing in on a narrow issue of journalistic ethics, he shifts our focus from the personal realm to the professional, forcing us to ask ourselves a question that was perhaps better unasked: What is this movie telling us about the state of TV news?

It is certainly not a subversive message. Brooks is saying nothing that would rouse the ire of any network executive. Indeed, Cheryl Gould, the senior producer of *NBC Nightly News*, has written for *Newsweek* a generally positive assessment of the movie in which she delightedly admits to "squirming in my seat" on hearing Jane Craig speak "lines straight out of my life." The things that trouble Brooks trouble Gould equally, but she assures us that the networks have them under control. "It's not today's network anchormen we have to fear," Gould observes. "They, unlike the William Hurt character, are intelligent, urbane and well-seasoned journalists. They are not propped up by producers, but work alongside them. Nor do I think that the big danger is local news hype and flash. That battle was fought and won over the last ten years, despite the occasional flare-ups."

Now, reasonable people may disagree over the distance that separates Tom Brokaw from Tom Grunick. More to the point are the questions that don't occur to Cheryl Gould, because *Broadcast News* doesn't provoke them. Why are the networks' anchormen so much more vivid to us than the stories they present? Why must anchors and correspondents always have the last word, although they have so little to say? Why is the news itself forever being told, in effect, "sorry, we've run out of time"? The answers to these questions lie, of course, in the need of networks (and, for that matter, local stations) to provide easy emotional segues from news to advertising, and to give the illusion of difference without running the risks of difference—to compete with each other for the public's affections even as they don't dare offend any significant part of the public.

Brooks juxtaposes the date-rape episode with a mass layoff ordered in the name of economy. In so doing, he encourages us to associate the breakdown of TV news ethics with the age of Lawrence Tisch. Here, too, he is not saying anything that would get him into a fistfight in the CBS News cafeteria. Of course budget cuts and layoffs have hurt the quality of network news reporting. But the erosion of the networks' former dominance over the medium—the cause of the budget cuts—is not so clear an occasion for dismay. The rise of cable TV and public TV have added a certain modest variety to the news diet; *The MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour* and ABC's *Nightline*, which it inspired, have, for starters, allowed people (even, on occasion, thoughtful people) to express views that take more than thirty seconds to state. That's not about to happen on any of the evening news shows, regardless of the size of their budgets.

If *Broadcast News* proves to be a hit with most of the inhabitants of the world of broadcast news, it will be, above all, because it celebrates what is nearest and dearest to them: the war against the deadline. At the beginning of the movie, Jane is putting together a story about a troubled veteran's return home. With only a couple of minutes to go before airtime, she decides to insert a dissolve to a Norman Rockwell painting on the same theme. A news aide, waiting to take the finished piece to the control room, protests that it's too late for such refinements, but Jane insists. With the cassette finally in hand, the aide runs as fast as her legs will carry her, nearly falling over an open file drawer, colliding with a water cooler and, in serious pain, arriving in the control room at the last possible moment. This is a triumph that *Broadcast News* invites us to share. Here, we are made to feel, lies the essence of TV journalism. But the romance of the deadline has quite as much as Lawrence Tisch to do with the degradation of TV news; meeting the deadline, beating the other network or fitting the story into two minutes and fifteen seconds instead of two minutes and thirty is the stuff of which TV news careers are made. If these goals are achieved, who cares if the story is indistinguishable from one that ran last week and the week before that—or from the one running simultaneously on another channel?

Insofar as Brooks has succumbed to the temptation to comment on what's wrong with TV news, he tends to ally himself with the view that there's nothing wrong that a little vigilance couldn't cure. It is to his credit, though, that his heart isn't in this—or any—easily summarized message, and that he never quite succeeds in turning the staged cutaway into the moral dilemma it purports to be. When Jane tells Tom that he has stepped over the line between responsible and irresponsible journalism, he says, "It's hard not to cross it—they keep moving the little sucker, don't they?" The man has a point. If TV journalists are to be bathed in graphics and throbbing music; if they are to be required to break every subject into bite-sized pieces; if it is to be their highest mission to provide gentle emo-

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tional transitions from, say, starvation in Ethiopia to a Burger King commercial, why should we get so worked up over a single, slightly false tear?

Kenneth Lipper, a former partner in the investment banking firm of Salomon Brothers and a former deputy mayor of New York City, served as a technical adviser to the movie *Wall Street*. In that capacity, he persuaded the director, Oliver Stone, to change a sequence in which a stockbroker of the old school, after making a number of snooty remarks about the unethical ways of his juniors, nevertheless snatches up the first insider tip that comes his way. Stone, according to Lipper's account (as reported in a recent puff piece in the financial section of *The New York Times*), agreed that it would be wrong to imply that everybody on Wall Street is "morally bankrupt"; and so, having shot the episode in two versions, he used the one in which the broker (Hal Holbrook) sticks to his principles and ignores the tip.

Few people other than Lipper, I suspect, will emerge from *Wall Street* feeling greatly reassured by this fleeting demonstration of integrity, if indeed they are alert enough to spot it. And few people will see in the film, as Lipper purports to, "the premise that Wall Street has a critical and necessary function and that it has an ability to heal itself." As far as I can discern, the Street performs no function in this story other than that of making money for itself; apart from the arguable example of the Holbrook character, we are not introduced to a single Wall Street denizen—broker, lawyer, arbitrager or takeover artist—who shows the least interest in capital formation, research and development, maintenance of plant and equipment or any of the other laudatory purposes presumably served by the modern stock market.

Wall Street, like *Broadcast News*, takes us into the bosom of a mighty American institution that is thought to have suffered a decline in standards. But Oliver Stone cannot be accused (as James Brooks might be) of failing to express a clear view of his subject. A so-called white knight who enjoys a reputation for caring about the long-term fate of the companies he acquires—and about the well-being of their workers and communities—is shown to be no different, at heart, from the shabbiest "greenmailer"; he mouths the pieties, that's all. As for the brokers employed at the fictitious firm of Jackson-Steinem, the only thing that keeps them from trading inside information is the difficulty of obtaining it. If Hal Holbrook is an exception, he's a lonely exception. This is a world that clearly needs more than a few polite reforms. But it is also—in marked contrast to the TV news setting of *Broadcast News*—a world with a high Hollywood gloss, for all the technical accuracy that Kenneth Lipper and his fellow consultants may have brought to it.

Wall Street has a certain pulsing rhythm, which is contributed by the vistas of hotheaded young brokers working their phones and computer terminals; by the razzmatazz of skyline and traffic that is Hollywood shorthand for Manhattan; by a nice, greasy performance on the part of Michael Douglas as an Ivan Boesky type (who says things like "Lunch? You gotta be kidding—lunch is for wimps!"); and by the short, punchy, hyped-up scenes with which the story unfolds. The movie, like today's young Wall Streeters, is in a hurry. It also seems to have been made in a hurry. Brooks's last film, *Terms of Endearment*, came out four years ago, and it apparently took him about that long to research, write, shoot and cut *Broadcast News*. Stone, too, spent years writing, planning and trying to get backing for *Platoon*—an investment that was evident in the finished product. Scarcely a year passed, however, between the completion of *Platoon* and the opening of *Wall Street*. With Black Monday so fresh in our memory and Ivan Boesky so recently dispatched to his new life, Stone has certainly struck while the iron is hot. But it's a crude blow.

Unlike Brooks, Stone and his co-writer, Stanley Weiser, appear to have approached their subject with their eyes on the big picture—on Wall Street itself—rather than on characters, relationships, scenes, etc. Their movie would have these things, because movies must; but what really counted, one senses, was the allure of the subject and the filmmakers' harsh slant on it. Hot off the success of *Platoon*, Stone would be (in the words of a Twentieth Century Fox press release) "turning from the jungles of Vietnam to the jungles of Wall Street." What more did anyone need to know?

The panic that struck the stock market last October 19 has been blamed, in part, on the growing role of program trading, which, in order to exploit certain short-lived fluctuations in the relative

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values of stocks and futures contracts, gives computers a large say in investment decisions. Program trading insulates its clients from some of the consequences of human frailty, while creating a system that, under certain circumstances, can behave quite irrationally.

Wall Street looks like the outcome of an equivalent process in moviemaking. The computer was given its instructions: Oliver Stone is turning from the jungles of Vietnam to the jungles of Wall Street, and he will need a script. After a three-hundred-millionth of a second or so, the computer spat out a story: Bud Fox, a naïve but money-hungry young stockbroker, would fall under the spell of Gordon Gekko, a spectacularly successful corporate raider ("the Manhattan carnivore at his most lethal," according to the press release). As a trafficker in inside information, Bud would quickly acquire such trappings of the high life as an automatic sushi maker, a $5 million penthouse and—to help him turn it into a wing of the Guggenheim Museum—an interior decorator played by Darryl Hannah. Along the way, though, he would lose the respect of his father—an airline machinist, a devoted unionist and a man who, as he himself observes, "never judged a person by the size of his wallet." Bud would then struggle to redeem himself by buying his old man's airline, only to discover that Gekko, his backer, intended to sell all the planes and hangars and fire all the workers.

Had there been a human monitoring the system, questions might have been asked. Would any young Wall Streeter, however naïve, try to approach Gordon Gekko—*the* Gordon Gekko—with a series of ordinary stock tips culled from public documents? Would Gekko choose for his protégé a boy who stages a temper tantrum on first being asked to do something slightly illegal, and who has such a flimsy network of contacts that, in order to secure the information Gekko wants, he has to dress up as a night maintenance man and prowl the halls of a law firm specializing in takeovers? With thousands of aspiring young Wall Street felons to choose from, couldn't Gekko find a more reliable partner in crime than this lunkhead?

Some of these points might have been easier to overlook, it should be said, with another actor in the main role. In *Platoon*, Charlie Sheen played a soldier who became jaded in a hurry, but recovered his bearings at the end; since he had already navigated that course in one corrupt setting, it may have seemed reasonable to have him do so in another. But in a soldier we accept a degree of rawness—a blank-slate quality—that we aren't so ready to accept in a stockbroker. (Wall Street has never resorted to the draft; it has always been a volunteer army.) And while we assume that war can change a person profoundly, we're not so sure about the stock market. In *Platoon* we did not demand to see the protagonist's education etched in his face. Here, we do—and we don't.

Darryl Hannah also raises questions of credibility, but it's hard to imagine the actress who could have brought the character of Darien Taylor to life. Darien Taylor used to be Gordon Gekko's mistress. Darien Taylor has been poor and she has been rich, and she knows which condition she prefers. When Darien Taylor is around, you realize how stunningly close Stone has come to making a long episode of *Dynasty* or *The Colbys*. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

5 London Plays
La Puta Vida Trilogy
The Seagull
Elektra
The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore
Serious Money

In mid-November I made a visit to London, where I took in five plays without once leaving the auspices of either the National Theatre or the Royal Shakespeare Company. This was not entirely by choice, since several productions assembled elsewhere were not available for review. But except for the new Peter Shaffer play, *Lettice and Lovage*, and a production of Sondheim's *Follies* starring Diana Rigg, a very large proportion of the most tempting shows were institutional fare (as were, in consequence, most of the dinners I ate in England, the cafeterias of the South Bank arts complex and of the Barbican being the safest bet for both palatability and timing). Not coincidentally, a large proportion of the best-received shows were repertory items or revivals; not only all five of those that I saw—Aphra Behn's *The Rover* of 1677; *The Winter's Tale*; an adaptation of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*; Genet's *The Balcony*; and *Three Men on a Horse*, a 53-year-old Broadway farce—but also plays by Coward, Priestley, Shaffer, Greene and Miller. New York critics often express alarm at the extent to which British dramatists have come to dominate serious theater in our country (as I think their plays deserve to, by virtue of their generally greater ambition and competence), but in London it seems clear that the greater liveliness of its theater is due at least as much to the revivals of classic works as to the current crop of live dramatists.

And that is as it should be, for talented actors and production staffs will always be in larger supply than capable playwrights, and actors can hone their skills to a much finer edge by staging work that is mettle-testing than in plays whose only virtue is their virginity. If this means that the theater will become, like the concert and opera stages, a kind of museum, I see no harm in that. If living playwrights, with all the advantages of topicality and a position atop the shoulders of the giants, can't compete with the dead, they are as little deserving of having their work funded and performed as those academic drones of contemporary music who kvetch that the public won't listen to their twelve-tone rows. And the art of playwrighting does seem to be in a similarly parlous state. Of the seven original plays I've seen since returning to New York, only one merits either praise or close critical attention; that was a production of Caryl Churchill's admirable *Serious Money* imported from London's Royal Court Theatre. The others ranged from the traditional avant-gardist posturing of a troupe "re-interpreting" the classic silent film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* to a stage sitcom about four retarded men living as roommates, a comedy remarkable for its condescension toward, and poor observation of, the objects of its lame jokes.

How so many plays that are not just flawed but wholly inept manage to be produced is perplexing but not entirely a mystery. Bad writers always believe in themselves, but the theatrical equivalent of vanity publishing is less detectable and accordingly more commonplace. There would even seem to be an understanding at the two review venues that cover everything, *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*, that theater at the wishful-thinking end of the scale will be dealt with according to its good intentions. After all, would you subject your kids' senior class play to the same

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standard of criticism as a Sondheim musical charging fifty bucks a seat? As long as it's understood that there are two realms (and who belongs in each of them) such a double standard is a great social convenience, allowing bohemia and Broadway to coexist amicably oblivious of each other.

The system does break down from time to time when B-menu plays find their way to A-menu stages, as happened earlier this season with the memorably unfunny *Late Nite Comic* and more recently at the Public Theater, which honored Reinaldo Povod, the author of the successful *Cuba and His Teddy Bear*, with an ill-advised production of *La Puta Vida Trilogy*, which bears the alternate title *This Bitch of a Life*. Not only on the basis of these juvenilia but also in a recent interview in *Theater Weekly*, Povod comes off as a living Jonsonian humour, a whining highwayman who tells doleful tales of his deprived childhood even as he holds his switchblade to his victim's throat. He has been addicted to heroin as a teenager (Act I), sexually abused as a child (Act II) and his mother is a hooker and tempts him to commit incest, but being a man of honor, he tries to drown her in a bathtub, then clubs her to death instead (Act III). These vignettes have been sanitized so as to make the Povod character always come up smelling like roses. He's in the shooting gallery, but *he's* drug-free; he exposes himself teasingly to a child molester, but *he's* not gay; he murders his mother, but only after she's knifed him in the back. And in the framing monologues, speaking in his own person, Povod makes it clear that it is we in the audience, bigots and plutocrats that we are, who are to blame for all the squalor we are witnessing, and that if his poor mother dies offstage he intends to exact one of our deaths in retribution. To be fair to Povod and the Public Theater, no one in the audience was actually mugged: the money that the box office took in was apparently sufficient to appease the young author's sense of injury.

Meanwhile, on East 4th Street, the RAPP Arts Center once again was setting an example of what can be achieved on the slenderest of budgets provided that there is imagination, intelligence and a text on which such merits would not be wasted; in this case, *The Seagull*. As with his earlier *Tartuffe*, director Jeffrey Cohen has updated the action to the present without significantly violating the text, and he consistently elicits performances that are at once broad and nuanced. Naturalistic dialogue alternates with "asides" after the manner of Eugene O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*, and Chekhov's humor, usually underplayed, becomes nastily, blackly Gogolish.

Lisa Diton makes Madame Arkadina's cheery, undentable callousness seem as topical as the latest issue of *Self*, and as the famous writer Trigorin, George McGrath (who is a John Updike doppelgänger) has just the right blend of self-absorption and sexual predation. But the crucial roles are Treplev, Madame Arkadina's son, an untalented playwright, and Nina, a would-be actress who jilts Treplev to run after Trigorin. Usually, these roles are acted sympathetically, and therefore to pathetic effect when the characters' ambitions come to naught. As performed by Daniel O'Shea and Carrie Owerko, Treplev and Nina are as gratingly unpleasant as their elders, and stupider. Nina's first-act rendition of Treplev's "performance piece" evoked with uncanny accuracy the callow tomfooleries of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* just two blocks to the west. When, in the last act, Nina recites these lines again, she isn't waxing nostalgic: she is rubbing Treplev's nose in his irredeemable lack of talent. His suicide immediately afterward has never made better sense.

Such is the nature of my lead time and RAPP's limited runs that *The Seagull* will be on its last legs, or off them, by the time this review appears. May I suggest, on the basis of their existing track record, that you take a gamble on one of the RAPP Arts Center's forthcoming productions? The next scheduled plays are *Orestes* and *Measure for Measure*. The box office phone number is 529-5921.

The same advice might be offered with regard to productions by C.S.C. Repertory on East 13th Street, but C.S.C. (Classic Stage Company) has long been a standby for those whose notion of a night on the town can encompass Goethe, Strindberg and Euripides as well as the latest hit musical. Their latest production was a version of Sophocles's *Elektra* written by Ezra Pound (with the help of scholar Rudd Fleming) during the years he was avoiding prosecution as a war criminal by faking insanity at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. According to C.S.C.'s program notes, Pound "never sought to have [*Elektra*] published because he

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feared it would serve as proof of his sanity." In the judgment chamber of my imagination, I've always thought Pound deserved the death penalty along with the team he'd served as cheerleader, but the merits of his *Elektra* manifested in this C.S.C. premiere are so incontestable that I find myself retroactively relenting. His *Elektra* has many of the oddities of *The Cantos*: the text is larded with fake cowpoke slang and hunks of raw Greek, but even these quirks, under director Carey Perloff's capable baton, *play*—and the great moments are thunderous. Pamela Reed in the title role, Nancy Marchand as Klytemnestra and Veronica Cartwright as Chrysothemis turned in performances of such scale and vocal finesse that you could almost hear Richard Strauss's score behind their voices. The male roles in *Elektra* are not so meaty, but Joe Morton as Orestes so well held his own against Reed that all my reservations about colorblind casting were quite overcome. In classic theater, as in opera, a white Elektra may well have a brother who is black, and Joe Morton is the proof.

I have never been able to figure Tennessee Williams as a Great American Playwright. As well salute Stephen King as a Great American Novelist. Indeed, the two writers have a lot in common: a fustian style, a readiness to swoon and/or be droll at the mention of Death, a tendency to confuse self-commiseration with philosophy and a thrifty way of apportioning to each year's latest production a single Horrific Idea. Also, they are both accomplished entertainers with a knack for creating roles that actors will kill for. Williams's one Horrific Idea for *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (1963) is the ambiguous vocation of its vagabond hero, Christopher Flanders, known among the expatriate grandes dames of the Bay of Naples as the Angel of Death, for he appears at the villas of wealthy dowagers as death seems imminent and proposes to help them on their way. Williams doesn't specify exactly how helpful Chris is, but there is a distinct whiff of his early tale "Desire and the Black Masseur" in the air. However, this frisson is kept in abeyance till almost the end of Act II, and the more than two hours that precede it are given over to a winking self-portrait of the artist as a dying queen. Lots of costume changes, mass quantities of booze, "Darlings!" and "My Dears!" Elizabeth Ashley camps it up grandly, and from time to time Marian Seldes enters, swathed in veils, and out-Herodiases her. It's at least three pounds of ham salad, and that's not counting the contributions of Stephen McHattie as the Angel of Death and Amanda Plummer as a kind of apprentice in the same business. However, I need not recount the cast's accomplishments at greater length, for Mimi Kramer has given such a circumstantial and accurate account of the production in the December 7 issue of *The New Yorker* that it is almost unnecessary to attend the W.P.A. Theatre to savor their production. Kramer professes to have found the evening "traumatizingly long and boring," but her account is so zesty and lip-smacking that I can't believe she was *that* bored. I think it is rather the case that many people watching a Williams play are trying to receive it on their ARTS channel, instead of as the vintage genteel trash it is. Seen as such, *Milk Train* scores four hoots and a whistle.

Caryl Churchill's *Serious Money* at the Public Theater is not only a comedy of great intelligence and high hilarity: it is also a formidably accomplished piece of writing. Literature, even. A verse play in doggerel couplets (though the meter varies, and there are riffs of prose no less delectable than the verse), *Serious Money* is a fictional documentary of the London stock market and its representative reprehensible denizens. Churchill provides data about her characters at a tempo calculated to overload any audience's receptive powers, but what an enlivening change from sitting in your seat thinking, "Yes, I've taken that in, that's very clear, now what?"

The production at the Public Theater was imported in its entirety from London's Royal Court and its downtown run ended on December 27. However, there is a Broadway production scheduled to open January 18 at the Royale Theater, and though it will have a new, American cast (with one possible holdover from the British cast), I can't think of a likelier investment opportunity. At the intermission, I was introduced to a gentleman who works as a floor trader on Wall Street, and he assured those of us lacking his privileged perspective that the stock market was exactly as Churchill has depicted it, which is to say: funny as hell, fast as the devil and awesomely corrupt.

There are no positive characters in *Serious Money*, which is unusual for a play on a public theme—no one to wag a scolding finger at the way of the world, only various kinds of villains. Churchill, as is her sovereign right as the world's leading female dramatist, allots larger and meatier roles to the women in her plays, and the three leading ladies turn in performances that bring out all the wit and polish of the text. Linda Bassett plays a stockbroker of Medusa-like (and Thatcherish) correctitude and hypocrisy. Meera Syal is Jacinta Condor, a "Peruvian businesswoman" who can wear a fur coat as if she had a natural right to the pelt, being a raptor herself. Joanne Pearce as Scilla Todd is the nearest thing to a heroine that Churchill offers, but that is only to say that of the whole bloody crew she has the best manners. The American cast that takes over these roles has their work cut out for them, and it's not the sort of work Americans excel at. The performing style Churchill requires is one likeliest to be mastered in Sheridan or Congreve or, at the farthest stretch, Shaw. The couplets must be delivered speedily and inflected knowingly, if they are not to become monotonous. Only in a theatrical culture, such as England's now, where actors may be presumed to have such accomplishments, can a playwright think to make such demands and hope to have them met.

That is not to say that London theatergoing is risk-free or necessarily worth a special pilgrimage. The most memorable night of my week there was not at a play but at a performance by the BBC Orchestra of Shostakovitch's 4th Symphony. The R.S.C.'s *Winter's Tale* and *The Balcony* were, respectively, disappointing and dismal. *The Winter's Tale* did yield one unforgettable *coup de théâtre* in its solution of how to deal with Shakespeare's infamous stage direction, "Exit, pursued by a bear," and Simon Russell Beale was a droll clown, but Joe Melia performing Autolycus as

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a Cockney music hall turn was the pits; the next night, in the crucial role of the Police Chief in *The Balcony* he did the same music hall turn to even more ruinous effect. The entire cast tackled Genet's text as though it were a West End bedroom farce, a little spicier than *No Sex Please, We're British* but then it's French, isn't it? The director in both cases (and, ominously, the new head of the R.S.C.) was Terry Hands. The R.S.C. had also imported to its neo-Elizabethan theater, the Mermaid, its Stratford production of Aphra Behn's *The Rover*. Even with matinee idol Jeremy Irons charming the bricks off the walls, Behn's play never quite reached escape velocity, but I felt improved and instructed to have seen it. On the evidence of *The Rover*, I think feminists who want to rewrite literary history to give women equal time and credit would be better served by a good theorist who can prove that the actual author of Shakespeare's plays was Queen Elizabeth.

Three Men on a Horse, by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott, at the Vaudeville Theater (but originating at the National), was an amiable and still serviceable farce so innocuous and really nice that absolutely every gentleman in the audience was wearing a suit and tie and every lady was coifed like Mrs. Thatcher. There are still some nooks and crannies of Old England where standards are maintained!

Across the Thames, at the National Theater, I missed the one play I'd most wanted to see, a full-scale Nicholas Nickelby–styled adaptation of Eugène Sue's *The Wandering Jew*, one of the Novel's most glorious excesses and my own early love. Instead, I saw a thoroughly sensitive and intelligent adaptation, by Brian Friel, of Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*. The acting was uniformly irreproachable. Robert Glenister as the nihilist Bazarov, and Robin Bailey and Barbara Jefford as his parents, did their big scenes together as though they were tennis pros giving an exhibition match. The only thing lacking was a sense of why Bazarov's "nihilist" ideas were once considered dangerous. In this version, Bazarov is simply an early Russian trial run of James Dean, a petulant wiseass who dies young to be mourned by all those who didn't love him enough when they could have. Sometimes one would do better to stay home, in America, and read the book. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Charles Demuth

There is a familiar puzzle-drawing that is a picture of a rabbit or of a duck, depending upon the way one looks at it. The "duck-rabbit," as it is called by philosophers, has been used since Wittgenstein to demonstrate how the same thing has different identities under different perceptual aspects. It would be a rare student of philosophy, on the other hand, who raised the further question of what *deep* identity connects ducks and rabbits so that they should be aspects of each other. But such considerations would not have been far from the mind of Man Ray when, in a 1930 photograph, *Anatomies*, he showed a woman from the shoulders up with her head bent back in so strenuous a way as to show us her chin from underneath: The lines of the jaw form an obvious visual pun on the head of a penis, for which the neck becomes the shaft. As were most Surrealists, Man Ray was obsessed with such transformations, and he would have considered the photograph a surprising revelation of an underlying oneness between male and female. A precise, if inadvertent, anticipation of Man Ray's wily and unsettling picture may be found in a sculpture by Brancusi. *Princesse X* is a sleek and abstract portrait bust of a woman with a very long and arched neck, her head and breasts reduced to polished knobs. It is a powerful irony that this marvelous form, in which a woman is reduced to her essential lines, should, through an irresistible perceptual switch, look unmistakably like an Art Deco phallus. It at least looked sufficiently phallic to have been removed, on grounds of questionable decency, from the Salon des Indépendants of 1920, angering Brancusi to the point that he refused to exhibit in France for the next several years.

With a work such as Brancusi's phallo-princess, the term "exhibition" (or, *en français*, *exposition*) takes on its own double meaning, which is captured, deliciously, in a masterpiece of giggling visual innuendo by the American modernist Charles Demuth, for me a high point in the stunning show of his work on view at the Whitney Museum of Amer-

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ican Art in New York City (it ended January 17). Titled *Distinguished Air*, the watercolor shows five persons, who could just be a group of lovers of advanced art, gathered in a circle of admiration around *Princesse X* displayed on a modernistic pedestal. As such, as much for its air of aesthetic sophistication as for its luminous and exact use of watercolor, it could have been a cover for *The New Yorker*. But the ambiguity of *Princesse X* makes the drawing itself ambiguous, and doubtless too risqué for that magazine. For it is also possible to see the scene as consisting of four persons caught up in a network of extreme erotic tension, transformed from art lovers to phallus worshipers. Two of the viewers/voyeurs are evidently gay lovers, their backs to us—a sailor and a sort of dandy who has looped one arm over the sailor's shoulders while drawing the latter's arm around his waist. The dandy could have brought the sailor here for aesthetic appreciation—or for sexual suggestion. The sailor must in any case be aroused, for another man, swinging a cane (and perhaps Demuth himself, who carried a cane and depicted himself with one) is peering, unmistakably, at the sailor's crotch (other drawings of sailors in the show leave us in little doubt as to what he saw). On the right is a woman in a delicate red frock with a fan in her hand. And the position of the fan leaves it unclear whether she has dropped her arm in aesthetic rapture or metaphorically to cool her inflamed sex. It is a witty meditation on art and sexuality—on art and sexuality as aspects of each other as they were aspects of Demuth's own personality.

These are aspects in a set of rather more explicit paintings of sailors—most markedly in *Two Sailors Urinating*, again of 1930, showing what must have been figures of his sharpest fantasies, holding the heaviest cocks I have seen outside the wall paintings of Pompeii, and possessing angelic faces. They are at the same time painted with an elegance and light, a fluidity and authority that mark Demuth as an absolute master of watercolor as a medium. The figures have the undulating feel of flowing water or leaping flame, and they are miracles of transparency, considering the dark blues of the sailor suits, the black neckcloths and the difficult browns of the wall behind them. One's focus alternates between salacious content and high artistry, as difficult to fuse into a single experience as the duck and rabbit, so the experience is one of tension and opponent pulls, and a resistance to a stable resolution. Indeed, the destabilization of the viewer sometimes seems to be the abiding intention of Demuth's work, flagrant in the explicit homoerotic pictures but never entirely absent from even the most innocent of his images—as it is never entirely absent from the characteristic paintings of his friend and confidante Georgia O'Keefe. (O'Keefe's insistently vulvar plant forms leave us wondering if they are metaphors, but never what they would be metaphors for.) Demuth's *On "That" Street* shows, again, an undulant dandy, in a belted coat, evidently propositioning two sailors, and posed in a way that must, to judge by a description from Proust (for which the figure could serve as illustration) have carried an unmistakable meaning in the body language of gay culture. The description comes from the opening scene in *Cities of the Plain*, where the Baron de Charlus and the tailor, Jupien, strike symmetrical poses in acknowledgment of their mutual recognitions. Jupien had "thrown up his head, given a becoming tilt to his body, placed his hand with a grotesque impertinence on his hip, stuck out his behind, posed himself with the coquetry that the orchid might have adopted on the providential arrival of the bee."

I am struck by the fact that *On "That" Street* is in the Alfred Stieglitz Collection of the Art Institute of Chicago, and I cannot help but feel it gives us a certain insight into the vocabulary, artistic and sexual, of the Stieglitz circle, to which O'Keefe centrally and Demuth peripherally belonged. Proust, marveling at the immediacy of communication between the two characters he has just described, wrote:

> One does not arrive spontaneously at that pitch of perfection except when one meets in a foreign country a compatriot with whom an understanding then grows up of itself, both parties speaking the same language, even though they have never seen one another before.

Modernism, in art as in sexuality, was the patriotism of a fragile band of aesthetic expatriates in the America of the 1920s, centered, in New York, around Stieglitz's gallery and, in Philadelphia, around the Arensbergs, in whose collection *Princesse X*, in one of its versions, is to be found, and at the Barnes Foundation, which contains several of Demuth's paintings. How embattled the aesthetically (and no doubt sexually) liberated colony of Philadelphia was may be inferred from the ferocity of critical invective that greeted Barnes's effort to show his collection of modern masters in 1922. So it must have been as though there was a kind of language that bonded the members of these circles together in a certain exclusive understanding—a language in which Demuth and O'Keefe, and of course Stieglitz, were fluent.

It was an esoteric language, perhaps half in self-protection, full of double-entendre and *sous-entendu*, private allusion and privileged slang, and in consequence is lost to outsiders, and certainly so to us, put in the position of code-breakers, certain that there is a message if we can but learn to read it. This is especially true of the so-called poster portraits that Demuth did of notable American artists and writers, which hover somewhere between riddles and allegories.

The term "poster" is ironic for such cryptic depictions, for it is the office of posters to make public declarations, in unambiguous terms, of whatever they celebrate; so a poster difficult to read is a failure in its genre. Barbara Haskell, who curated this show and wrote the splendid catalogue that accompanies it, sees in these an appropriation of advertising, which is a peculiarly American genre; but the poster, I think, is far more characteristic of Europe than America, and the tantalizing evasiveness of Demuth's symbols seems at odds with the spirit of advertisement, unless he is using it to subvert its ordinary functions. What, precisely, is being ascribed to O'Keefe by the snake-plant and the cubistic pears in her portrait? The portrait of John Marin has the form of a red, white and blue sailor's collar (with two stars), and has "MARIN" superimposed on the word "PLAY" (MARIN PLAY = *marin plait* = sailor pleases?) penetrated, as in a valentine, by a red arrow (arrow = *flèche* = flesh?). I jest, but the interpretations anyone can offer are mere conjectures today, and in some cases no interpretation is available because the subject has simply dropped out of history, as in the case of Charles Duncan, where, as Haskell says, "The poster remains as enigmatic as the subject." A successful reading is available of *The Figure 5 in Gold*, evidently a portrait of William Carlos Williams as the numeral 5 (cf. Stevens's *The Comedian as the Letter C*). It consists, mainly, of three nested inscriptions of the

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numeral 5 (which looks like a stylization of *Princesse X* turned upside down), and must be read as marking stages in a movement toward the viewer—a translation of the numeral through space. The numeral 5 is a metonym for a fire engine that it identifies, the fire engine is a metonym for a poem of which it is the subject, and the poem is a metonym for the poet. Presumably those in the closed circle were to have the requisite knowledge to work out the solutions to these depictions—yet Haskell tells us that even Demuth's close friends were puzzled by the portraits. But all of the works are characteristically, if less obviously, puzzling, concealment being a dimension of Demuth as an artist.

Demuth was one of the great masters of watercolor painting, an exacting medium because of the difficulty of exploiting its fluidity without sacrificing form, and of maintaining the transparency inherent in washes—and finally because of the irrevocability of spills and errors. Too much fluidity and the work puddles, too little and the medium is betrayed. Cézanne, whose aquarelles are among the most lyrical ever achieved, attained their clarity in consequence of his extreme deliberateness, allowing a wash to dry completely before laying another one over it. This must have been a long and demanding strategy, evidence for which consists in the fact that the majority of Cézanne's watercolors are unfinished, and owe their clarity to the amount of paper left white and untouched. It is true that we have a special taste for the unfinished, and so acknowledge these pieces as masterworks. But it is difficult to believe Cézanne himself would have shared our view, and those rare watercolors he in fact completed to his own standards are often dark and confused—a bit like the painting that is described as *le chef d'oeuvre inconnu* in Balzac's novella of the same name, with whose obsessed hero, Frenhofer, Cézanne explicitly identified himself ("Frenhofer, c'est moi"). No one carried watercolor further than Demuth, whose pictures have the clear radiance of great illuminations, but retain the fluency of water and the virtuoso's immediate accuracy. His is one of the great touches of the art.

The fluidity in Demuth's earlier flower studies prevails at the expense of clarity, which he gained, in my view, under the influence of his oil paintings, begun in the late 1920s. It was almost as though he sought a way out of the washiness and found in oil a certain dry translucency and a sharpness he was then able to translate into watercolor. The oils are of sections of industrial landscape with the smokestacks and water towers characteristic of nineteenth-century industrial architecture in his native town, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to which he later returned, in effect, to die. These landscapes have the precision of the industrial process itself, purged of dirt and smoke. (They belong to the precisionist movement in American painting, a style we get a silvery echo of in the *New Yorker* covers of Gretchen Dow Simpson.) As oils, Demuth's landscapes have been somewhat unfavorably compared with his watercolors, but I believe that the oils gave him a certain discipline which he needed in order to achieve the brilliance of his final watercolors of fruit and flowers, arranged in nearly musical compositions, animated by an almost musical invention, filled with inversions and repetitions—and done in colors so pure, certain, so free of accident, as to bear comparison with the flowers that are often their immediate subjects.

Still life, at its greatest, is almost always artificial and implicitly mysterious, hinting, through juxtaposition, at meanings that could not otherwise be expressed. This is so in Spanish still life and in Dutch; and Demuth arranged his objects in ways we would expect from someone of his hermetic disposition. *Eggplants and Pears* shows two of each of these, startlingly similar in shape but complementary in size and hue, and connected by strange affinities underscored by the deliberateness with which they are placed. In *From the Kitchen Garden*, a pair of tomatoes, a paired squash and eggplant and a pair of sunflower heads ascend as in a kind of baroque composition—like a deposition from the cross. *Green Pears* of 1929 (remember the curious pears in the O'Keefe portrait!) shows seven of these fruit, arranged as two sets of triplets, with a single pear—the only one with a leaf attached—surmounting an inverted plate, and in the aggregate looking like a bar in some musical piece. There is another melody of pears in a painting from 1925. It is instructive to study the piled and paired fruits together with Demuth's famous studies of vaudeville performers—dancers, acrobats, tumblers—shown in delicate balance with one another, in perilous mutual support which might be a metaphor for the possibility of love. It is subtle, ironic, brilliant work, the out-

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ward expression of a shimmering artistic intelligence—wry, crafty, entertaining even, but with the promise of depth at the same time as being wholly accessible. He must have been a wonderful person to know.

This exhibition will be housed at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from February 25 to April 24; at the Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, from May 8 until July 10; and at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from August 7 until October 2. I cannot recommend too highly the quality of the reproductions in the accompanying catalogue, in case you are unable to view the paintings themselves; Haskell's text presents an interpretation as sympathetic as it is illuminating of the artist and his work. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 92*)

ocratic but its authoritarian and self-promoting bureaucracy. A recent study showed that 117 teamster officials earn salaries of more than $100,000 a year—all paid for by workers' dues. The average number of officials who earn that much in other large unions is one. *Teamster boss Jackie Presser, one of the few labor leaders who may accurately be called a "czar," gets $600,000 in hard-earned dues money. He has not been elected democratically by the rank and file in his whole sordid career. By the way, Jack Cox, the head of Joseph Hancock's old organization, Local 572, in Los Angeles, was appointed by Presser to the International General Executive Board, the seat of corrupt power.*

Neither the argument that "everybody is corrupt" nor the fact that Robert Kennedy waged an aggressive campaign to disempower labor can excuse the real abuses in the teamsters, nor justify the union's reinclusion in the A.F.L.-C.I.O. without a major structural reorganization and personnel change. Nor does it make sense to exonerate Presser because the Central Intelligence Agency favors an A.F.L.-C.I.O. arm (AIFLD) for some of its foreign dirty tricks. The teamsters, after all, were early and hearty supporters of Reaganism, with all of its vicious foreign and domestic policies.

The teamsters' union has been helpful in some local labor actions, hurtful in others. Hancock mentions the Watsonville strike. He should check out the role of Andy Anderson, a former head of teamster Local 986, in Los Angeles, and onetime active teamster director for the entire West Coast, who upon retirement (with his fat pension) went to work for the strikebreaking Watsonville Canning Corporation, the management side in that dispute. That doesn't sound like labor solidarity in the old popular front to us.

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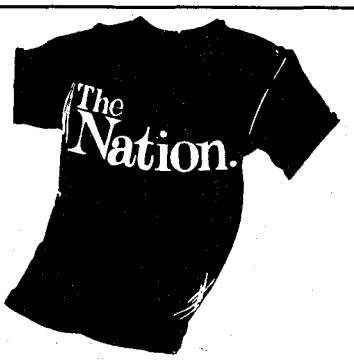

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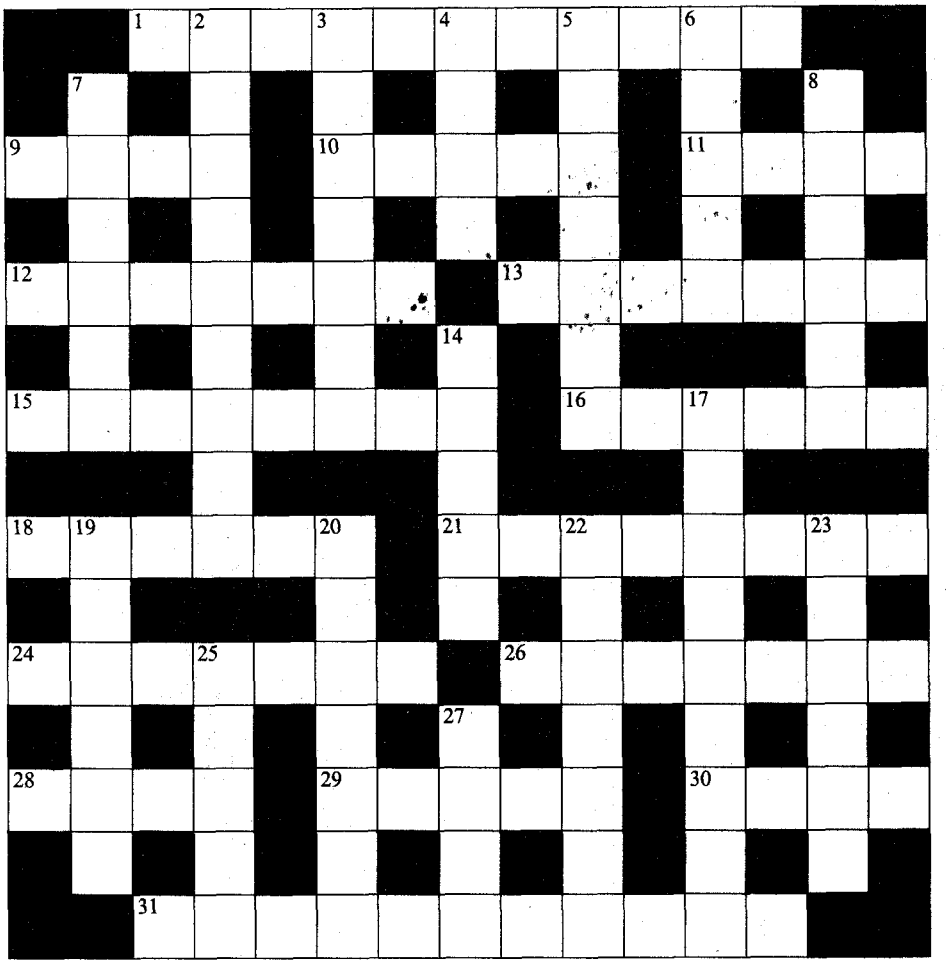

ACROSS

1 Rigity-jig, as the children sang, and the comedian exited. (3,4,2,2)
9, 10 and 11 See 23 down
12 See 14 down
13 Everything about a small salmon shows spirit. (7)
15 Tennis and golf could—as the tempting type might suggest. (2,1,5)
16 Not-so-prudent serving of bacon? (6)
18 and 28 Such a person is certainly not a gadabout. (4-2-4)
21 What ice cream cones take, as well as bad little boys (and Timexes). (8)
24 Act like a bad light bird? (7)
26 What might contain a baby's bye-bye? Sing it! (7)
28 See 18
29 The actor Jeremy might be associated with the press. (5)
30 A radical figure who gives some people a pain? (4)
31 What a person such as Bowdler does with the club sleep-in badly arranged. (4-7)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

DOWN

2 The state of the old cow? Quite the contrary! (3,6)
3 and 20 Reputedly sufficient—"Hoot!" for example, to the owl. (1,4,2,3,4)
4 and 27 Against a way to show affection, or just something for the snake-bite? (8)
5 Is the guy riding a bike also a dealer? (7)
6 You might recognize her dress, with nothing on. (5)
7 Is this guaranteed to get a smile? (6)
8 A common girl with a product of mine—and lots of it. (6)
14 and 12 across Does a hedger's statement mean "Hang everything!" (2,3,7)
17 You might get up last, in a way, to find the holy man. (5,4)
19 Having everything in tow shows you're getting fat. (6)
20 See 3 down
22 A bunch of students—less than one hundred—show one of the things they sometimes study. (7)
23, and 9, 10 and 11 down See an off-Broadway production? The patient might not say so. (3,3,4,2,3,4)
25 A fairly large number act drunk, but there might be a catch in it. (5)
27 See 4 down

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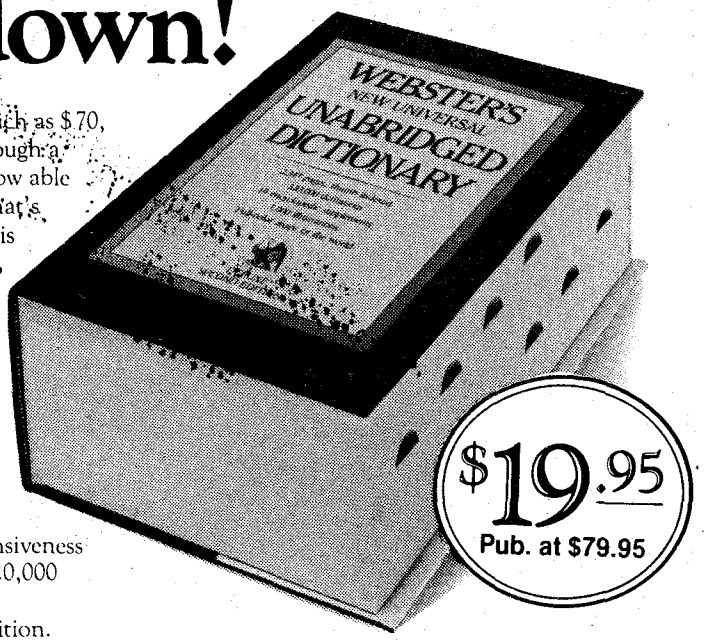

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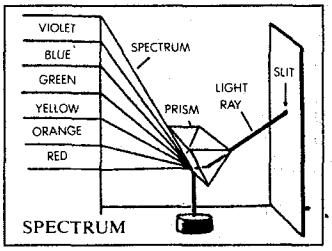

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